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In Focus

This issue commences with the second part of Shri N. Hariharan's article on Thyagaraja's shishya parampara in Pathantaram - A Musical Value (Part - II).

Sakuntala Narasimhan pays tribute to three pioneering women musicians, N. Hariharan pays homage to Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and Jyoti Mohan writes about the multi-faceted former editor of Shanmukha Shri P. N. Krishnamoorthy, all of whom have left behind a big void and a big legacy.

An insightful article into a relatively recent discovery – the Kamakshi Navavarana kritis of Oothukadu Venkata Kavi, is written by Chitraveena N. Ravikiran, while Subha Kailas describes some poetic delights contained in the Thiruppugazh.

Sakuntala Narasimhan commemorates a unique platinum jubilee – that of an egalitarian music journal published in UP, followed by reports on the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aaradhana festival by Kripa Subramaniam, and a unique Carnatic music camp conducted in Karnataka by Jayaram Athreya.

Book Review of the quarter is by P.P. Ramachandran on Euphony – by celebrated violinist Dr. L. Subramanian. This quarter we start a new column called Sabha Nostalgia – a trip down memory lane with senior sabha members.

Nalini Dinesh reports on happenings at the sabha (with Jyothi Mohan covering the Members' day) and Vidyalyaya. The highlight of Sabha activities was the Jyeshtha Dampati function, a celebration of the hundredth and eightieth birthdays of our Sabha elders in a narrow sense, but in a much larger sense, a celebration of lives well-lived, values carefully nurtured and wisdom, acquired no doubt, through tests of fire and ice.

As promised, Hemalatha Veeramani presents the musical crossword in English along with answers to the Tamil crossword of the previous issue.

□

PATHANTARAM - A Musical Value (Part-II)

by N. Hariharan



Umayalpuram Swaminatha Iyer

Sem mangu di Srinivasa Iyer was the most prominent among Swaminatha Iyer's lineage of disciples. About his guru his oldest living survivor sishya at the age of 95, told the magazine "Sruti" once: "One could hardly find another teacher like him. He imparted to his students sound knowledge of swaras. His way of giving beginner's lessons was very attractive. He would see to it that the student could sing pure swaras, and hold them long before going on to further lessons. His voice was thijn. But what melody! He sang without any superfluity. He discouraged his students from indulging in mathematical intricacies. He also urged them to avoid shouting (adhattal) in singing kalpana swaras, and stressed that swaras should follow the raga and have 'sukha bhava'." After the demise of Swaminatha Iyer, his sons Venkatarama Iyer, who was a violinist too and accompanied many leading singers of the day, and Rajagopala Iyer also a violinist, moved to Madras. They added to their repertoire, constantly learning more kritis; some 50 kritis they learnt from Tillaisthanam

Narasimha Bhagavata whose notebooks they could refer. The kritis he published in 1908 are the "pathantharam" of Tillaisthanam Rama Iyengar who was very close to Thyagaraja as he lived just two miles away from his guru's home. But he kept no written record of his repertoire. Thiruvotriyur S. A. Ramaswamy Iyer was a disciple of the Umayalpuram brothers as also Walajapet Krishnaswamy, son of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavata, who was an amanuensis for Thyagaraja as he wrote down instantly the compositions (from inspiration) sung by his guru. He was his pupil for 26 years. Living close, he used to walk each way 10 miles daily to go to his guru's home. Ramaswamy Iyer had a vast repertoire of Thyagaraja kritis besides the two operas of the bard "Nauka Charitram" and "Prahlada Vijayam". Prof. P. Sambamoorthy and Dr. T. Srinivasa Raghavan, a nephew of Tillaisthanam Rama Iyengar, learnt some compositions from Ramaswamy Iyer, who gave authentic information to Prof. Sambamoorthy on the "pathantharam" of Thyagaraja kritis. Krishnaswamy could repeat the "sangatis" exactly (without any deviation) just after listening once. Another shishya of Umayalpuram brothers was Nallur Narayanaswamy Iyer. He was a multifaceted personality, a winner of "Tandavapandita" title for mastery of Bharata Natyam and Bhagavata Mela (a pupil of renowned Melattur Venkatarama Sastri). He served as a teacher in the Kumbakonam music school and was on the experts committee of the Madras Mu-

sic Academy. The noted violinist of yester year Bangalore Munuswamiappa (who was guru of Bangalore Nagaratnammal) also was a pupil of Swaminatha Iyer. Other disciples were Manjakudi Subramania Bhagavatar, Krishnamurthy, Umayalpuram Subramaniam among others who spread his "pathantharam". Many were the ragas popularized by them and their shishyas—Kalyanavasantham, Narayani, Gundakriya, Simhavahini, Bhavapriya, etc., says Dr. Ritha Rajan who has mentioned the characteristics of the Umayalpuram "pathantharam" in her doctoral thesis. Musicians of this school rarely sang compositions in vivadi ragas, she says, though Thyagaraja's repertoire had 25 vivadi raga kritis. They popularized *Emani pogadutura* (Veeravasantham) *Bagaayanayya* (Chandrajyothi), *Phanipatisayi* (Jhankaradhwani).

To revert to the second generation of Krishna Bhagavatar, he had only one son Natesa Iyer who took to teaching at a school as his profession though he kept alive the family's music tradition by teaching the Sadguru's compositions to his children. He was a violinist too. Unfortunately he died prematurely at around 40 years, leaving four sons and three daughters. Economic conditions forced the family to migrate. His eldest son Thyagarama Iyer joined the Defence Accounts Service and served in North India. However, he kept up the music tradition, having been trained as a vocalist. He learnt to play the gottuvadyam from the renowned artistes Sakharama Rao and Budalur Krishnamurthy Sastrigal. He performed at Delhi, Simla, Bangalore, etc. in Tamil

dramas and gave musical discourse on Thyagaraja at "aradhana" fetes. Natesa Iyer's other three sons too were musically accomplished. Rajagopala Iyer had learnt some special compositions of the bard from Swami Bhagavatar and Ayya Bhagavatar (son of Sundara Bhagavatar). He taught these and other kritis to his daughters and Thyagarama Iyer's sons. Venkata Subramania Iyer was both a vocalist and accomplished gottuvadyam player. He too was employed in Central India, at Raipur and Nagpur, where he did the guru aradhana devoutly and gave musical discourses for invited audiences. His son V.S. Amarnath Sury too was in government service, secretary of Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion council. He was trained as a vocalist and promotes music as a secretary of the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Mumbai. The youngest son of Natesa Iyer Muthukrishna Iyer, spent most of his life in Nagpur and Bhopal as a Madhya Pradesh government employee. An erudite vocalist, he also was a composer. The 26 songs in Tamil composed by him spontaneously were published after his demise by his son Dr. M.S. Narayanan. The third generation of the Umayalpuram Brothers have kept up the music tradition by learning the savant's compositions and also learning to play instruments like veena, gottuvadyam and mridangam. They have striven to perpetuate their great-grandfathers' memories. T. Karthikeyan, son of Thyagarama Iyer, has set up two endowments at Thyagaraja Vidwat Samajam, Mylapore, Chennai and at the Madras Music Academy for sponsoring

concerts and publications. Umayalpuram Brothers Day is celebrated on 5th July every year at the Samajam. The late R. Venkataraman, son of Manjakudi Ramachandra Bhagavatar, was an accomplished vocalist who broadcast recitals from Delhi and Madras for over three decades. His sister Santha Rajan also had learnt several Thyagaraja kritis from her father. The present generation of the progenies of Thyagarama Iyer and his brothers are cultivating the family traditions. A granddaughter of Thyagarama Iyer (through his daughter) is a promising singer

gifted with a rich voice and a natural flair for melody. She was a pupil of Thyagarama Iyer's son T. Santhanam a scholar with deep knowledge of music. She has scored high academically and has become a chartered accountant, but nurtures ambitions to learn music to high standards to be a concert performer. The traditions of the parampara will stay alive for generations to come, perpetuating the "pathantharam" for the greater glory of Carnatic music. □

AWARDED!

Dharini Veeraraghavan, 7th year student of the Vidyalaya, has been awarded the CCRT junior scholarship for Carnatic music for 2009. Dharini is the only junior from Maharashtra to have been awarded this year. It may be recalled that another Vidyalaya student Aditya Madhavan had the same distinction in 2008.



ALL INDIA RADIO GRADE

Two diploma students of the Vidyalaya, Govind B. & Vidyanandi N. Iyer were graded B by All India Radio in classical Carnatic Vocal & Carnatic Veena respectively during this year (2009)

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THREE WOMEN STALWARTS, BIDDING ADIEU....

by Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

Two leading women vocalists, both known as "Titans" on the basis of their commanding stature in the world of music, passed away this year. D.K.Pattammal, one of the "Trinity of women musicians of Carnatic music of the 20th century" passed away in Chennai on July 16th while the same week, Gangubai Hangal who was known as one of the stalwarts of Hindustani music, passed away too. By the time this appears in print many eulogies and obituaries would have been put out, in print as well as radio and TV, on both these artistes, so let us look beyond the conventional details of birth, training and awards, to why these two women commanded so much respect.



D.K.Pattammal

Pattammal (born 1919) caught the attention of music audiences during the 1930s, because she was a pioneer, the first female from a Brahmin family of south India, to get formal training from a professional male performer and sing professionally in public. My grandmother was a good vocalist and also a path-breaker in her time (early 20th century) when her mother-in-law (who had only two sons and no daughters) sent her two young daughters-in-law (both married as child brides) for formal training in classical

Carnatic music in Kancheepuram. My grandmother could sing complicated pallavis and has left behind a thick notebook full of notation for rare compositions in several languages - Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, even writing some of the notation in Grantha script, at a time one hundred years ago, when vocalists, let alone women artistes, didn't bother about notation. But grandmother wore a nine yards sari and led a tradition-bound life, and although her expertise in music was admired, she never took to the stage like Pattammal did a generation later. Pattammal's contemporaries, M.S.Subbulakshmi, N.C.Vasantakokilam, T.Brindamma, and M.L.Vasantakumari, did not have the handicap of a Brahmin heritage in a conservative society that needed boldness to challenge and surmount.

She also had the guts to sing patriotic songs in the pre-independence years when the British were still our rulers, and her "Aaduvome pallu paaduvome" and other songs were hugely popular. During the few personal interactions I had with her, I found her almost child-like - the first time was when I was a teenager and her son Shivakumar played the mridangam for me (along with M. Chandrasekharan on the violin) for a special "Children's concert" (Kuzhandaigal katcheri) that All India Radio had organised with an invited audience at Srinivasa Sastri Hall in Chennai. She was all praise for the Kalyani I sang (she need

not have been, I was just a 14-year-old with a bad ENT infection that day, and she was already a star, part of my mother's generation). Another time, many years later, I met her backstage at Mumbai's NCPA, before her concert, during the mid-1980s, and as she rose to go on stage she raised her hands in utter humility and prayed to God, to make her recital successful ("Ellaam nallapadiya nadakkanum, Deivame"). For someone who had already notched up thousands of public concerts before mammoth audiences, this was a touching betrayal of human frailty and tension. Her music was not of the fireworks variety but she was admired precisely for that "azhuttam" and solid precision. The death of an artiste of that calibre, who was also a pioneer among women, does cause a sense of loss, even if she was 90 at the time of her death, and well past her singing days.



Dr. Gangubai Hangal

So too it was, with the death of Padmavibhooshan Dr. Gangubai Hangal of north Karnataka (Hubli-Dharwad). She too was in her late 90s, and life must have been a burden, especially after her daughter Krishna (who used to lend vocal support during her concerts) passed away a few years ago. I was invited to be part of the felicitation function to mark her 94th birthday in Hubli, and I decided I would pay my tribute not

with words or with details of her Kirana gharana etc (which one can get from any website) but with a tarana composed and sung for her. She heard me out, sat through the function despite her age and infirmities, and made a short speech at the end. Both Pattammal and Gangubai had one thing in common – they both had "masculine voices", and sang at a pitch much lower than the average female vocalist. Reports say that Gangubai's voice was damaged and turned thick after surgery, and indeed I have heard an old record in which she sounds like a female. None of the radio or other obituaries bothered to unearth this record, they all played only her later recitals where the voice sounds like a male. Unlike Pattammal, her background as the daughter of a professional singer added its share of pain to her experiences but she was nothing if not gutsy. What they had in common was the slogging they both put in, in terms of years of hard training. I doubt if that kind of rigorous slogging is even attempted these days, by the younger generation. Neither of them offered 'flashy' music, what they offered was 'solid' and strictly tradition-bound. In that lay their claims to recognition as leading ladies. One tribute broadcast in the wake of her death in July, recalled how, at one concert, someone in the audience asked for some "light" music. Gangubai pointed to the overhead light bulb and quipped, "This is the only 'light' I know, I sing only classical numbers." Neither Gangubai nor Pattammal can be accused of using "feminine" wiles to get ahead, they stayed strictly away from any glamour-related images. This does need mention because female achievers are often accused of

using their femininity to bolster their artistic worth.



Sharan Rani

Yet another famous woman musician, Sharan Rani Bakliwal, passed away a year ago, in April 2008. She too was a pioneer in the sense of being the first female to take to the sarod professionally. To this day, there are very few women playing the sarod (Zarin Sharma, nee Daruwala, rose to fame as a young and gifted female sarod player during the 1980s but otherwise, one cannot recall even a handful of names). In fact, even males take to this difficult instrument only rarely. Sharan Rani was a pioneer among women instrumentalists of post-independence Hindustani music, and her death has been

condoled widely, through tributes from all over the musical fraternity, including comments from Sonia Gandhi and Sheila Gujral. But while Sharan Rani had the advantage of being Delhi-based, Pattammal and Gangubai preferred to remain in their own southern niches (Gangubai in a small town, away from the metropolitan milieu) and wait for the encomiums to come to them, which they did garner, in abundance.

As this generation of pioneering women who broke into male bastions as performers passes the three-score-and-ten span of human life, we are bound to lose them one by one, due to age. The current generation which has grown up in the post-independence years, needs to recognise the tremendous breakthroughs that these pioneering women artistes made, to make it easier for their musical heirs and descendents to take to the arts with greater ease.

□



Shri R. K. Srikantan

NATIONAL EMINENCE AWARD

The Sabha's National Eminence Award will be presented in December 2009. The National Eminence awardee is Shri R. K. Srikantan and the Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Shiromani awardees are Shri Embar Kannan for Carnatic Violin, Shri Abhishek Raghuram for Carnatic Vocal and Shri Bhuvan Komkali for Hindustani Vocal.

ALI AKBAR KHAN TOOK INDIAN MUSIC TO WORLD STAGE

by N. Hariharan



Ustad Ali Akbar Khan

The world of Indian music has lost a legendary sarod player in the demise of Ali Akbar Khan at the age of 88 in San Anselmo, California, on 19th June 2009. Ali Akbar along with his former brother-in-law sitar maestro Ravi Shankar took Indian music to the world stage. Both were as keen on teaching as in performing. Ali Akbar is survived by 11 children, including the reputed sarod player Ashish Khan, from his three marriages. His death revived in me memories of my association with him in 1947 when Ravi Shankar had become a Pandit of Banaras Hindu University, yet was striving for recognition along with Ali Akbar whose sister, surbahar player Annapurna Devi he had married. Both had learned from her father, legendary multi-instrumentalist and musician Ustad Allaaddin Khan, a quintessential "Bangaali" from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) who founded the world-renowned Maihar gharana. Ali Akbar was born in Comilla in East Bengal on 14th April 1922. We shared

a same-year birth relationship and I treasure the many musical values he had unfolded to me, calling me "bhai saheb".

Khan Saheb, as his numerous friends and associates called him, wanted to become a noted ustad (teacher) as much as a top creative performer. It was the blessing of the muse that he excelled in both. Ali Akbar went ahead of Ravi Shankar in taking Indian classical music to the West. His Ali Akbar Khan College of Music in San Rafael, near San Francisco, and another in Switzerland have attracted thousands of students from all corners of the world since they were started in 1967. With the passage of years they became unparalleled institutions for the teaching of Indian classical music. The Ali Akbar Khan School of Music in Kolkata started early by him is still functioning.

Some of the students of Ali Akbar have become accomplished sarod payers. Notable among them are son Ashish Khan, Ken Zuckerman, Tejendra Narayan Majumdar, and tabla virtuoso Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri.

Majumdar paying homage to his guru said, "Such a musician is born once in 1000 years. His death is a great loss to the music world". The world-famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin once after listening to a performance by Ali Akbar, remarked that he was the best instrumentalist of all time.

Ali Akbar Khan began learning music at the age of three from his illustrious father Allaaddin Khan. Music was in his blood. His prodigious talent was noticed early in life and honed well by his father-guru. His debut performance at the All-India Music Conference in Allahabad in 1939 was a memorable event when aficionados hailed his redefinition of the way sarod was played. Ali Akbar stormed the concert stage thereafter. And All India Radio recorded him as a visiting artiste at the metros where he performed. Radio in those days had a big listening clientele, music constituting 60 per cent of the broadcast fare. I recall Khan Saheb taking me to Bombay radio station studios once in 1947 to listen to his recital being recorded. My appreciation of the alluring aesthetic unfolding of the ragas by him, his 'meends' and "gamaks", he valued much. Rave reviews in newspapers those days helped artistes to scale heights.

Sarod in the hands of Ali Akbar was an instrument to explore impactful presentation of melodies. His alaps had a distinct individuality, the subtle twists and turns of swaras casting a spell. He was innovative by instinct.

He has created and popularized many new ragas, notable among them are Gauri Manjari, Lajwant, Madhavi and Madhu Malati. The sensuous charm of the strains from his sarod and the depth of feeling in elaborating the "cheezes" imparted great joy to the listeners, an experience which touched the core of one's being. There is no exaggeration in what Congress

President Sonia Gandhi said in her homage, "The music from his sarod was for the soul". Ali Akbar was close to the Nehru family with his Allahabad connection. They were his patrons and fans.

Honours came unasked to him. He got the President's award early on. He was awarded the prestigious civilian honour Padma Vibhushan in 1989, and earlier the Padma Bhushan award. He secured two Grammy nominations and won the MacArthur Genius Award, besides honoris causa doctorates from many universities. The title he valued most was "Swar Samrat" (Emperor of swaras) conferred on him by none other than his father - guru. Pandit Birju Maharaj, the famed Kathak dance exponent, who was a close friend of Ali Akbar said he was ailing for long with kidney failure and was on dialysis at the time of death. Death was a deliverance from more suffering. "He was the supreme artiste in the world of sarod and the void left by his death can never be filled", Birju Maharaj said mourning his demise.

Ali Akbar had a stint in the film world too. He scored music for many Bengali films, including Satyajit Ray's *Devi*, as also *Jhinder Bandi*, *Kshudita Pashan*. Anything he touched he adorned. He boldly experimented with classical music – the way he presented the traditional ragas was original. His immense contribution to Hindustani music will be ever remembered, he will remain ever-shining in the musical galaxy.

P. N. KRISHNAMOORTHY: An extraordinary man, an extraordinary life

by Jyothi Mohan



P. N. Krishnamoorthy

PNK: Three alphabets that spelt much more than can be written, about a scientist, administrator, musician, writer, critic, musicologist, mentor who was above all, a wonderful human being. Shri P.N. Krishnamoorthy passed away on 16th November, 2009, after a brief illness.

He was the Director and Principal of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya for four years, as well as the editor of Shanmukha journal during that period.

Though he held several important positions in atomic energy (he retired as Controller BARC and was the first Member Secretary of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board) and Department of Electronics in New Delhi and had worked with such luminaries as Dr. Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabai and Prof. M. G. K. Menon, he devoted all his available time to his passion—music.

PNK recognised the need to build a huge body of discerning rasikas, who would ensure that music remained pristine. Towards that end, he held classes for all those desirous of learning, patiently taking them through the beauty of classical music. He did not look for rewards of any kind as he felt any service to music was a reward in itself. He encouraged upcoming talent as well as local talent by organising chamber music concerts for them at his house, long before the sabhas did. Several leading musicians dropped by at his house when in Mumbai for a concert. He invited all rasikas to meet them and interact with these visiting vidwans. He held music appreciation courses in sabhas and invited experts to come forward

and demonstrate various finer aspects of music.

He offered his services freely to several organisations that sought his administrative ability and guidance. He was instrumental in setting up the Bhakta Rasika Ranjani Sabha at Anushakti Nagar to host musical stalwarts.

He wrote articles and reviews regularly for several years for leading publications like The Economic Times, Indian Express etc. which were looked forward to and were highly acclaimed. He was much sought-after at music seminars, conferences etc. to head panel discussions.

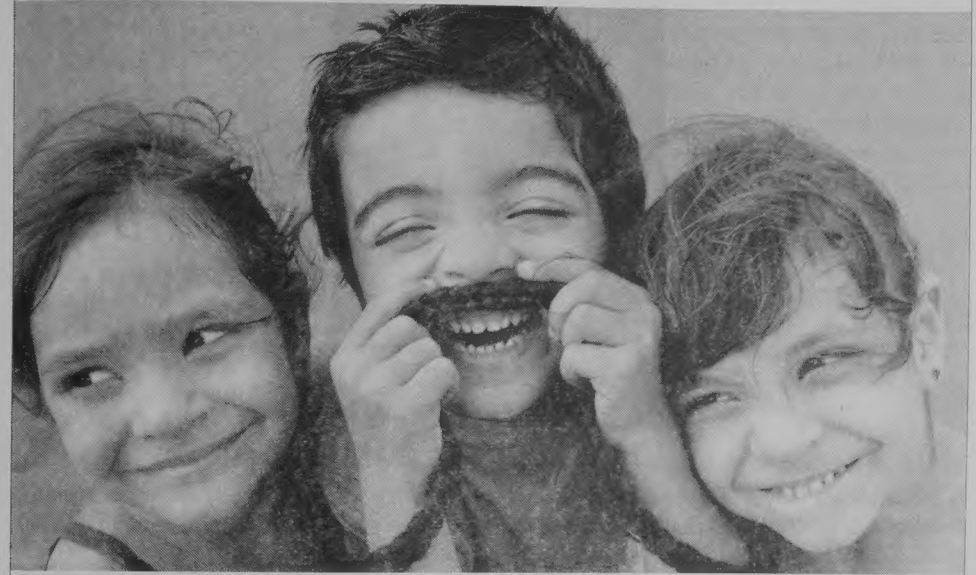
He was an excellent musician too. Endowed with a rich voice that traversed 3 octaves with ease, he had a large repertoire. His ragam-neraval-swaram singing was outstanding. He kept trying out new pallavis, demonstrating to us, that pallavi-singing was not beyond us. His unbiased views and forthcoming nature besides his expertise attracted students living abroad too. He visited the US regularly to teach a dedicated band of students there till recently. He was also on the board of western classical music bodies based in Vienna in the earlier years.

His interest in art did not stop at music - he was an avid follower of modern art and made many trips to art galleries to add to the art collections at BARC. He believed in sharing his passion for the fine arts with his family and friends at a very personal level.

A rare combination of science and music couched in a patient, humble, generous personality, touching the lives of those he came in contact with—that was PNK. We will miss his physical presence, but he has left his imprint on the music scene for years to come.

□

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KAMAKSHI NAVAVARANAMS OF OOTHUKADU VENKATA KAVI

By Chitravina N. Ravikiran



Kamakshi

The Kamakshi Navavarana kritis of Oothukadu Venkata Kavi (1700-65) are monumental creations of a mega composer. Volumes can be written about them but this article merely gives a bird's eye view. They are mainly 12 songs* as below:

Song	Raga	Tala	Remarks
Sri Ganeshwara	Shanmukhapriya	Adi	Vinayaka stuti
Vanchayasi yadi kushalam	Kalyani	Adi	Dhyana stuti
Santatam aham seve	Deshakshi	Adi	1st avaranam
Bhajaswa sri tripura sundari	Nadanamakriya	Adi	2nd avaranam
Sarva jeeva dayapari	Shuddhasaveri	Misra Chapu	3rd avaranam
Yogayogeshwari	Anandabhairavi	Khanda Triputa	4th avaranam
Neela lohita ramani	Balahamsa	Khanda Dhruva	5th avaranam
Sadanandamayi**	Hindolam	Sankeerna Mattiya	6th avaranam
Sakala loka nayike	Arabhi	Adi	7th avaranam
Shankari sri Rajarajeshwari	Madhyamavati	Adi	8th avaranam
Natajana kalpa valli	Punnagavarali	Adi	9th avaranam
Haladharanujam	Manirangu	Adi	Phala stuti

* Some scholars opine that Padmini Vallabha (Dhanyasi, Adi, addressed to Surya) and Shri Chakra Matangi (Suruti, Adi, Mangala krti) are also part of the set.

** Another song is also there in Khanda Mathyam but the one listed is more authentic.

Hidden treasures: These dazzling songs have come to light only over the last few decades. The master composer's works were largely confined to the descendants of his brother for almost 200 years. In the earlier part of the 20th century, thanks to the efforts of noted Harikatha exponent, Needamangalam Krishnamurthy Bhagavathar, Venkata Kavi attained enormous popularity through mellifluous compositions in Tamil such as *Alaipaayude* (Kanada), *Taaye Yashoda* (Todi), *Paal vadiyum mugam* (Nattaikkuranji) and *Kuzhaloodi manamellam* (Kamboji). These however bestowed upon him an image of a uni-dimensional minor composer who composed attractive pieces on Lord Krishna.

But deeper studies of his works reveal that these songs – which are really from an opera based on the story of Lord Krishna – form only one facet of this consummate composer. The majority of his works discovered reveal that he possessed tremendous scholarship in both Sanskrit and Tamil and was a master of melody and rhythm who composed hundreds of pieces suitable for music, dance, operas and musical discourses. They also show that he pioneered several conceptual sets of pieces such as Saptaratnas and

Navaavaranam. His masterly creations put him in the 'same league of the Trinity' according to the doyen of music, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.

Navaavarana worship: The Navaavarana pooja forms the mantric-tantric ritualistic part of Devi worship, associated with the Srichakra pooja. An aavarana may be understood as a covering, a veil that must be removed in order to reach the supreme Shakti, residing at the center point (bindu).

In the very first dhyaana krti in Kalyani, Venkata Kavi says:

*Vaanchasi yadi kushalam maanasa
paramaananda rasa sindhu madhya mani
bindu chakra nilayaam niranantaram
dhyayeta Shree Kamaksheem*

"Oh mind, if you aspire for well being, worship at all times Goddess Kamakshi, residing in the *bindu chakra*, a source of supreme bliss." He makes references to the bindu chakra in several other pieces even though it is only the 9th aavarana krti in Punnagavarali that is wholly dedicated to it.

Aavarana details: Venkata Kavi's krtis, addressed to the Goddess of Kanchi, effortlessly highlight important particulars like the *aavarana*, *chakra*, *yogini*, *mudra devataa* and *manovrtti* in a spontaneous manner. Right in the opening song, Shri Ganeshwara he has given intricate details with phrases such as:

'Shree vidyopaasana bodhakara', 'Anala saala antargata vighna yantra harana' and 'Amoda Pramoda senaa naayaka'

Even though his compositions are replete with scholarly content, they are not merely abstract compositions that summarise factual detail. They are soulful outpourings that brim with sublime devotion – an incredible combination of intellect, emotion, knowledge and inspiration. Each song is addressed directly to the Goddess except the dhyana krti, which is addressed on one's mind. So, every song gives a personalized touch, which is typical of Venkata Kavi's style.

Striking openings: The opening phrases are themselves striking in several songs and show Venkata Kavi's familiarity and closeness with the Goddess as a devotee, apart from his expressive style. The composer's lyrical skills are further evident when he indulges in word play. For instance, he opens the Nadanamakriya piece with:

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This threw several scholars off the mark as they could not figure out why the composer would ask the Goddess to worship him! Deeper analysis revealed that Venkata Kavi has used the verb bhaj not in the usual meaning of 'worship' but to ask the Goddess to turn her attention towards him and bless him. The precedent for the usage of bhaj in such a context is found in no less an authority than the Bhagavat Gita when Lord Krishna says:

ye yatha maam prapadyante tamstathaiva bhajamyaham

"I turn my attention to those who worship me."

Deep erudition: The pieces are exceedingly scholarly with significant words and phrases that can be traced to Lalitopakhyanam, Taittiriya Upanishad, Lalita Sahasranamam and several other such sources. Expressions such as "Chintamani Shripura madhye" (seen in 1st avaranam) are taken from Tantrik texts dealing with Samayachara, the method and procedure prescribed for inner worship of the Shrichakra. So is "kamakala pradarshini" (3rd avaranam) which denotes the subject-object (prakasha and vimarsha) state of the Almighty. Tantra shastra refers to the harmony of Shiva-Shakti by the single term, kaamakalaa, part of the Primordial Desire which led to creation.

In the 8th avaranam in Madhyamavati, he has brought out a postulate seen in Tantra Shastra about how the Goddess is really in charge of the five functions of creation, protection, destruction, illusion and salvation.

srshti sthityaadi pancha kaarana krtiyendra gana sammaanite

In the 6th composition in Hindolam, he mentions the names of the eight Regents of the Directions (ashta dik paalaka) and says how the Devi is worshipped by them:

sada vinuta sura vaasava paavaka shamana nairta yaadasaampati pavana dhanada eeshaana dishaampataye

A study of these songs reveals that Venkata Kavi was not merely familiar with numerous works but more importantly, had deeply internalized their content and spirit. He has also mentioned several bijaksharas (powerful syllables) in various krtis such as

'eem', 'hreem' and 'kleem'. Further, there are several musical references about the Devi holding instruments that permeate lustrously through music.

'tantri samanvita veena dharini'

'manikya manohari veena dharanaam'

'geyarata navaparvaantara bhaasini'

Effortless brilliance: Venkata Kavi does not appear to have intentionally composed with any master-plan in mind (unlike Muttuswami Dikshitar, who used different vibhaktis for his Kamalamba Navavaranam set) but nevertheless, he has set such high standards in a few areas that they remain unmatched till date. In a rare gesture, he has signed one of the pieces in the set (the 8th avarana) with his own name:

Venkata Kavi hrdis sarasija vitarana patutara bhasini

In the final song in Manirangu (phala stuti), he has used what is now getting accepted as his secondary signature, reference to the dancing Krishna.

Kaleeya phana pada nysam

Soulful melody: It is not as though he is making any statement but his credentials as an atyuttama vaggeyakara come through in these pieces and challenge the best of musicians to master them and render them convincingly. He has employed rare ragas like Deshakshi and Balahamsa, apart from evocative ones like Anandabhairavi, Nadanamakriya and Punnavagarali. The 6th avaranam, Sadananda mayi is one of the most majestic and brilliant pieces ever

composed in Hindolam with incredible features in a 20-unit tala with kalai change.

In the krtis in Kalyani and Shuddhasaveri, the composer has innovatively inserted madhyamakala within the pallavi as opposed to the usual practice of most composers using it at the end of a section. Such techniques give a refreshingly distinctive touch to Venkata Kavi's compositions.

Stunning rhythmic concepts: Venkata Kavi has handled sophisticated talas like Khanda Dhruvam and Sankeerna Mathyam, has effortlessly shifted gaits (gati bhedam) from Chaturashram to Tishram in the 8th avarana in Madhyamavati in which he has also shown a rare command over slow speed tishram (splitting the 3 units evenly as 1.5 per beat) in the first part of the anupallavi. In the krti in Hindolam, he has employed a striking concept of speed shift within a composition that no other composer seems to have even conceived of. The first and second sections (pallavi and anupallavi) are in 2 kalais (with 8 units per beat) while the charanam shifts to one kalai (with 4 units per beat) before reverting back to the original speed.

Equally importantly, the manner in which he has partitioned the tala within each cycle in certain places is very instructive. There are lines where he has divided the tala into equal parts. For example: in the madhyamakala after anupallavi in the 4th avarana krti in Anandabhairavi, Yoga yogeshwari has split the 9-unit Khanda Triputa into 4 parts of 2.25 units each. In a few other places, he has followed the

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structure of even complex talas like Khanda Dhruva (5+2+5+5) and Sankeerna Mattiya (9+2+9).

Colourful contrasts: If one looks at the Kamakshi Navavaranam set, one can see the wonderful contrasts in the pieces between ragas, talas and tempo. The last is especially interesting since Venkata Kavi has composed several songs in normal medium speed and not opted for what is conventionally accepted as 'weighty' and composed all pieces in slow speed. The fourth, fifth, sixth and ninth avaranams are in slow speed while the third in Shuddhasaveri in Mishra chapu, is in a medium-slow tempo

Conviction: In the 9th avarana krti in Punnavarali, Venkata Kavi suggestively affirms his conviction about how one can please the Goddess by the rendition, contemplation or meditation of the Navavarana krtis and get her Grace:

*saara saara navaavarana gaana dhyana
yoga japa tapa rasike*

Objective: Venkata Kavi reveals the objective of his Navavarana worship only at the end of the set. After getting her Grace, one seeks the boon of access to Lord Krishna from Her, in the final song in

Manirangu:

*Haladharaanujam praaptum vayam aagata
dehi Devi*

"Oh Goddess, we have come seeking Your Grace to attain Krishna, the younger brother of Haladhara (Balarama). Please grant us our wish."

The spirit of this can be taken from chapter 22 in the dashama skandha of Shreemad Bhagavatam, which describes the Katyayani vrata undertaken by the gopis to be blessed with Krishna as their husband. So, even the Navavaranam show that Venkata Kavi was immersed in the spirit of the Bhagavatam especially with respect to the story of his favourite Lord, Krishna.

Of general significance is the fact that women sing several songs on Devi during the Navaratri festival. The composer has given them an objective to align their minds to, in the final song – that of getting a good husband and enjoying a happy marital life.

All in all, the Kamakshi Navavaranam are wonderful additions to the Carnatic world.

Courtesy: Naadha Brahman Oct 2007

□

SRI KANCHI MAHASWAMI SANGEETANJALI

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திருப்புகழ் - ஒரு சிறப்புப் பார்வை by Smt. Subha Kailas

உலக சமுதாயம் ஒன்றுபட்டு அமைதியுடன் வாழ ஞானிகள் ஆங்காங்கே தோன்றிக் கொண்டே இருக்கிறார்கள். அவர்கள் தங்களைப் பூரணமாக ஆண்டவனிடம் அர்ப்பணித்து, கண்டறிந்த தத்துவங்கள், அனுபவங்களை உலகோர் அறியும் பொருட்டு பல இலக்கியங்களைத் தந்துள்ளனர்.



திருவிளையாடல்களை நேரில் காண்பது போல் ஒரு உணர்வை ஏற்படுத்துகின்றன.

முருகன் வாழும் பல மலைக் கோவில்கள், குன்றுகள், அறுபடை வீடு, ஏனைய பல ஸ்தலப்பாடல்கள் உள்ளன. அந்தந்த இடங்களின் நிலத்தின் செழுமை, நீர் செழுமை, இயற்கை காட்சிகளும் மிகவும் ரசிக்கும்படி வார்த்தைகளால் படம்பிடிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. பழநி, சுவாமிமலை போன்ற ஸ்தலங்களின் அழகுகள் பாடுவோர் மனதைக் கொள்ளை கொள்ளும்படி அமையப்பெற்றுள்ளது.

திருமாலின் மருகனாக வர்ணிக்கப்படும் இடங்களில் மஹாபாரதம், ராமாயணம், கிருஷ்ணரின் லீலைகள், தசாவதாரக்காட்சிகள் மிகவும் ஏற்றமாக இடம்பெற்றுள்ளது. உதாரணமாக “கதிர்காம” ஸ்தலப் பாடல் “உடுக்கத்துகில் வேணு” என்ற திருப்புகழில் சுந்தர காண்டம் விளக்கப்படுகிறது. திருக்கடவூர் ஸ்தல “ஏட்டின் விதிப்படி” என்ற பாடலில் மஹாபாரதத்தில் பாண்டவர் சூதாடி, தோற்று வனவாசம் மேற்கொண்டு ராஜ்யம் கிடைக்காமல் போர் செய்து வெற்றிபெற்ற பகுதி சிறப்பாக காட்டப்பட்டுள்ளது.

கீதையில் சொன்ன வேதாந்த கருத்துக்களும், சொற்கவை, பொருட்சுவை, லயம் இவை அனைத்தும் கலந்து பக்திப் பரவசத்தில் ஆழ்த்தும் திருப்புகழ், அனைவரும் அன்றாடம் வேண்டும் மகிழ்ச்சியும், மன அமைதியையும் அள்ளித்தருவதில் என்ன சந்தேகம்!

வெற்றிவேல் முருகனுக்கு அரஹரோஹரா.

அந்த மகான்களில் ஒருவராக சுமார் 600 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்னால் தோன்றியவர் அருணகிரிநாத ஸ்வாமிகள். தெய்வத்தால் ஆட்கொள்ளப்பட்டு, பக்தியில் மூழ்கி அடைந்த ஆனந்தத்தை எல்லோரும் அனுபவிக்க வேண்டும் என்று அன்பினால் இசைவடிவமாக தந்துள்ளார். மொழியின் அழகும், பொருட் செறிவும் மிகுந்த பாடல்களாக திருப்புகழ் விளங்குகிறது. வேதங்கள், உபநிடதங்கள் உணர்த்தும் பரம்பொருளின் தத்துவங்களை எளிதில் அறியுமாறு அமைந்துள்ளது. பாடலுக்கு பாடல் வேதாந்த கருத்துக்கள் எடுத்துக் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளன. திருப்புகழ், சுந்தர் அலங்காரம், சுந்தர் அனுபூதி, திருவகுப்புகள், திரு எழு கூற்றிருக்கை, வேல், மயில், சேவல் விருத்தங்களை இயற்றியுள்ளார்.

திருப்புகழ் பாக்களின் சந்தச்சிறப்பு கேட்பவரை பரவசத்தில் ஆழ்த்தும். 1008 சந்த வகைகள் இருப்பதாக பெரியோர்கள் கண்டு அறிந்துள்ளார்கள். கற்பவருக்கும் சந்தங்கள் வழிகாட்டிபோல் பெரிதும் உதவுகிறது. லயக்கட்டுக்கோப்பு பாடுபவர், கேட்பவர் இருவருக்குமே ஆனந்தத்தை அளிக்கிறது. தமிழ் மொழியின் செறிவினால் மயில் ஆடுவது போலவும், முருகன் அலங்காரங்களுடன் மயில் மேல் வருவது போலவும், அவனுடைய

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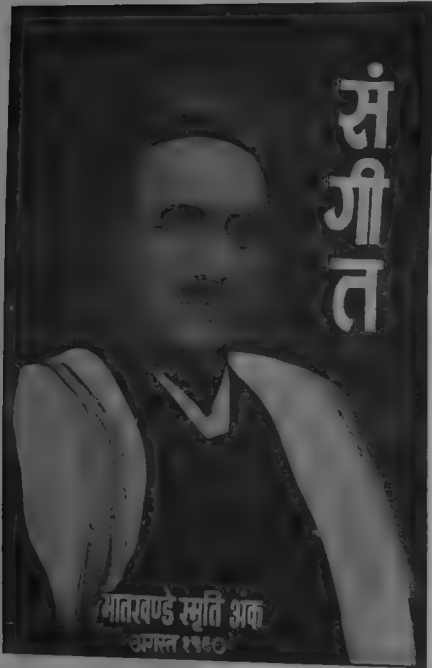
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SANGEET: 75 – AND GOING STRONG

by Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan



called Sangeet, for an astonishing 75 years – exactly as old as the current managing editor, Dr Lakshminarayan Garg (who celebrated his 75th birthday recently, with felicitations pouring in, from Pandit Ravi Shankar, santoor maestro Pandit Shivkumar Sharma and musicians known and unknown all over the country). The Garg family has in fact become synonymous with this magazine, with three generations nurturing the venture with determination borne of their keen passion for Indian music. When other such publications with a restricted and niche – readership have floundered or folded up, Sangeet is surviving and going strong. In December 2009, Sangeet magazine completes 75 years of existence.

A typical issue carries not only research papers on subjects like music and the new mass media, folk tunes of specific tribals, dhrupad traditions, gharanas, and reminiscences about great masters like Ustad Allaiddin Khan (Ravi Shankar's guru) but also notation for popular film songs (especially old songs from yesteryear) along with news items about the music and dance worlds (awards, obituaries and celebrations). Notation and lyrics for khayal bandish are also often included, along with explanations for rare ragas, so that each issue of the magazine becomes a valuable addition to the serious student's reference library.

The editors have also devoted special editions to topics like music courses and

degrees available around the country (including courses in Carnatic music, at various universities) and details of topics taken up for post-graduate research at various institutions. One issue during the 1990s was devoted to women musicians of India (again, covering also Carnatic artistes, including T.Brinda, MLV and others), each with a short biography and a photograph wherever available.

Over fifty years ago (in 1957) the same Hathras karyalaya brought out a hardbound 688 page volume of biographies of a large number of musicians, titled "Hamare Sangeet Ratna" in Hindi (Sangeet magazine is also in Hindi). This biographical publication was of immense value to me when I was on a two-year research assignment on Rampur gharana for the ministry of culture. The photographs therein are of archival value. The book also included some south Indians (Professor Sambamoorthy, for instance).

Dr Lakshminarayan Garg is now engaged in putting together a more ambitious collection of biographies covering both Hindustani and Carnatic musicians not only of the 20th century but also historical figures like Thyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar, and stretching up to the current generation of performers like Mandolin Srinivas. An excruciating amount of laborious research is required for putting together an all-India compilation like this, checking dates and authenticating facts, but clearly this is what the Garg family revels in, otherwise they would not have persisted in keeping a magazine of this kind alive, for 75 long years!

The January 2008 issue had a special focus on the legendary actress and singer, Suraiya, who was the queen of the film scene during the pre-independence era. Some of her songs are still being broadcast by AIR on popular demand. "O door jaane wale, vaada na bhool jaana" and "Socha tha kya, kya ho gaya" sung by Suraiya in the films Pyar ki jeet and Anmol Ghadi respectively, continue to tug at the heartstrings of elder music and film aficionados, over half a century after these became hits. The fat (135 pages) issue not only gives each song recorded by Suraiya, with the name of the film and that of the composer and music director, but also provides notation with the lyrics. Truly a collectors' item and a valuable edition for all researchers as well as film music buffs.

The August 2009 issue (with a photograph of Lord Nataraja on the cover) includes some khayal compositions (vilambit and drut, with notation) in the Carnatic raga Amrutavarshini. Some of these Amrutavarshini khayals were sung by the late Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki (who was admired by the likes of M.S.Subbulakshmi).

The point I am trying to make is that those of us who decry the dilution of taste for classical music (remember, most film songs of yesteryears were classical based) whether in the north or the south, need to take note of such initiatives also, where a determined individual or group of individuals, undertake and keep alive a thankless job that nonetheless adds to our corpus of archival material on the state of our performing arts. At a time when media houses try to tailor their content to maximize sales (and therefore commercial profits)

There is a widespread perception among south Indians that north Indians are not as interested in Carnatic music as we are in Hindustani music. There is truth in this.

However, there are always exceptions that disprove generalizations. I am thinking here, of one such exception. Everyone has heard of Mathura near Delhi but how many know about another small town close to Mathura, called Hathras? This town in U.P. has become synonymous with a Sangeet Karyalaya which has kept up the task of publishing a monthly music magazine

even if this means unethical focusing on gory sensationalism like rape or murder reports, there are also publications that cater to a small number of readers who are interested in nurturing their preference for the classical performing arts. The limiting factor is of course, finances for serious initiatives like this – unless there is funding in the form of grants from some cultural body, or sponsorship through philanthropists, it is difficult to keep alive publications that cater to a small bandwidth of readers. Once upon a time, royalty would grant money for such activities, now under our democratic polity the state-financed bodies are supposed to fill in the gap left

when the role of princely states was truncated. Ultimately, however, it is the music loving public, connoisseurs and art lovers, you and I, who have to become the nurturers of publications that seek to preserve for posterity elements of current or obsolete dimensions of our precious arts. The modern generation is so obsessed with money-making and “doing well economically” that the erosion of cultural strands of our lives goes unnoticed. We need not only such magazines but need to support those like Sangeet that not only cover Hindustani music but also include in their vision developments on the Carnatic front.

□

CLEVELAND THYAGARAJA AARADHANA FESTIVAL

by Kripa Subramaniam



V. Subrahmaniam, Pala C. K. Ramachandran and Seetha Rajan being honoured

The Cleveland Thyagaraja Aaradhana Festival is on its journey for 32 long years and is conducted during the Easter Holidays at Cleveland Ohio State in the U.S. for the non-resident Indian to savour our cultural heritage through South Indian classical music and dance forms. The popularity that it has gained over the years, is to be seen to be believed.

Initially the celebrations were during weekends and now the duration has increased to ten days. The catalyst behind this whole exercise is Shri V. V. Sundaram popularly known as Cleveland Sundaram. Shri Sundaram, Smt. Gomathi Sundaram, Shri Toronto Venkataraman and quite a few others carry on the mammoth task of organizing this festival.

The Festival was dedicated this year to the memory of Sangeetha Pithamaha Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, whose centenary was celebrated in July 2008. Senior disciples of Sri Semmangudi, Shri V. Subrahmaniam, Shri Palai C. K.

Ramachandran, and Smt. Seetha Rajan were honoured with Semmangudi Memorial Award. The other senior artistes on whom titles were conferred are Smt. Parassala Ponnammal - *Acharya Ratnakara*, Bharathanatyam Maestros Sri Dhananjayan and Smt. Shantha Dhananjayan - *Nritya Ratnakara*, Violin Maestro M. S. Gopalakrishnan - *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, Sri A.K. Palanivel - *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, Smt. Suguna Purushothaman - *Sangeeta Kala Sagara* and eminent musicologist Dr. B.M. Sundaram - *Sangeeta Seva Ratna*.

It was most gracious on the part of the Aradhana Committee to celebrate Sri Semmangudi's centenary in a grand and fitting manner. Sri Semmangudi never travelled abroad. His father was against his son crossing the oceans as it was considered to be against Sastric injunctions. In fact the American Music organization CMANA came down all the way to Chennai, India to felicitate him for

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his signal contribution to the cause of Carnatic Music. This being so, Cleveland Aaradhana Committee added one more feather to its cap by dedicating this year's series to Sri Semmangudi. In their "Sustaining Sampradaya Scheme" they planned to teach the kritis popularized by Sri Semmangudi.

With a set of senior Gurus, such as V. Subrahmaniam, Palai C. K. Ramachandran and Suguna Purushothaman, Semmangudi's famous songs, *Marubalka*, *Ksheenamai*, *Harihara putram*, *Rama Nee Samaanam Evaru*, *Ramajoki*, etc., were taught through Skype classes to students in the U.S., to be presented by them at the festival. It was indeed most gratifying to hear these youngsters singing these kritis flawlessly at the festival.

The festival kicked off on the 11th of April 2009, with the singing of the Thyagaraja Pancharatna Kritis by all the artistes-young and old-in the forenoon, with immense fervour. In the evening the Vice Chancellor of the Madras University Dr. Ramachandran presided over the felicitations function.

Students of the Wesleyan University trained by Shri Balasubramaniam presented songs acquitting themselves so well that one was literally awe-struck since there were students of American origin as well in the group. Music competitions were held for students of all age groups and some young performers were outstanding for their age. Their love and commitment to the art was very much to the fore.

The highlights of the festival were two programmes. One was Geeta Nrityam by

the Dhananjayans which was based on Gopalakrishna Bharati's Nandanar Charitram. Many leading artistes sang for the presentation. On 14th April, Tamil New Year's day, a Guru Samarpanam Concert by Shri V. Subrahmaniam and Shri Palai C. K. Ramachandran, to the violin accompaniment of Shri M. Chandrasekharan, and mrudangam by Shri Guruvayur Dorai and Shri Madirimangalam Swaminathan was held.

The hospitality section was taken care of by the Comfort Inn which literally comforted, with breakfast, lunch and dinner. Artistes never missed home-cooked food which included Vattakuzhambu, Lemon Rice, Thayir Sadam and so on. The dining hall was the meeting place for all artistes to interact. Practice sessions and workshops for dancers were held in the side halls.

Lovers of Carnatic music converged in large numbers at Cleveland. It was almost like reliving the Madras Music Academy Festival. Men and women were in their "Pattus" and fineries relishing every moment of their stay. Some met their old friends, some cultivated new friendships and all were eagerly participating and interacting with the musician community.

Just as the two sides of a coin, Cleveland has the only rock-and-roll museum in the world, exhibiting the likes of Elvis Presley and the very same Cleveland presented our hoary rich cultural heritage of India. The banks of the lake Erie took pride in featuring the classical ethos that emanated from the banks of the River Cauvery and added a new dimension to the classical form. □

UNIQUE CARNATIC MUSICAL CAMP

by Javaram Atreya

(He was part of the team that participated in the camp from Mumbai)



Children learning from
Vidushi Kalyani Sharma at the camp

It was pouring Carnatic Music for five days in May at Nidle, a hamlet near Mangalore in Karnataka. There were music lessons, practice sessions, lecture demonstrations, concerts by students, teachers and eminent artistes. This unique event christened "Sangeet Shibhira" (Musical camp) was organised from May 5 to 9 this year by the renowned violinist Shri Vittal Ramamurthy.

Initiated in the year 2001 by Vidushi Smt. Rajarajeswari Bhatt (sister of Shri Vittal Ramamurthy) the camp, is now being carried forward by Shri Ramamurthy with the support of his parents Shri Subraya Hebbar, Smt. Krishnaveni Hebbar, his wife, sisters and other family members.

Nidle located around 72 kms. from Mangalore and at an hour's drive from the holy place of Dharmasthala is a beautiful village with hills, lush greenery, farms and pollution-free environment. Amidst this sylvan setting is an ancient house called Karunbithil (meaning sugarcane in Kannada) the ancestral home of Shri Ramamurthy. It is in this age-old house that

the Shibhira is being conducted every year in a typical Gurukulam style where the students are exposed not only to traditional methods of learning and assimilating Carnatic Music but also to ancient set-ups, customary practices and conventional ways of living.

Shri Ramamurthy and his family members, along with several visiting eminent musicians like Shri Lalgudi Jayaraman, Shri T. V. Shankaranarayanan, Shri Neyveli Santanagopalan, Shri Vijay Siva, Shri Vellore Ramabhadran, Shri Kamalakara Rao, Smt. Shankari Krishan, Shri T.M. Krishna and Shri S. Kasturirangan have been conducting the workshop for the past eight years.

This year, around 120 students from neighbouring towns and villages participated in the workshop. These students aged between six and twenty five years were trained in different groups according to their age and learning capacity. But all of them shared the same environment - eating, singing and sleeping under one roof in Karunbithil. It was fascinating to see how these youngsters effortlessly adapted to the new yet traditional environment. They were equally adept at learning the various compositions taught by their Gurus with great dedication.

This year, eminent musician from Mumbai, Vidwan Smt. Kalyani Sharma, recipient of Bodhaka award (2008) from Music Academy and her senior disciples joined the home team in conducting the camp.

While Smt. Sharma was the principal Guru at this camp, some of her disciples like Bharati Nagaraj, Chinmayee Nagaraj (Shri Vittal Ramamurthy's sister and niece) and Bhavani Srinivasan also helped in training the students and rehearsing the lessons. The training sessions generally began around nine in the morning every day and continued non-stop till around 4.30 p.m., except for the breaks for Kashayam (a health drink), lunch and snacks in-between. After the teaching sessions the students would practice on their own, in groups, correcting each other's renditions and perfecting them.

The evening sessions stretching from 6 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. provided every student an opportunity to perform on stage either singly or in groups. The presentations varied from simple geetams, kritis, tillanas and folk songs of Karnataka to elaborate concerts depending on the student's capability. Guru Kalyani Sharma's disciples also pitched in with their own individual and group renderings.

The musical sessions were interspersed with some visits to nearby hills and farms as also Satyanarayana Puja and Durga Puja which were performed at Karunbithil.

On the third day Vidushi Smt. Kalyani Sharma presented an exceptional concert showcasing the traditional style of presenting a concert for the benefit of the students. She was accompanied on violin by Shri Vittal Ramamurthy and on mrudangam by Mannarkoil J. Balaji. After the concert Shri Ramamurthy explained the intricacies of a full-fledged Kutcheri, citing examples from Smt. Sharma's concert.

The Shibhira concluded in the temple hall

of Southyadka Ganapathy on May 9 in the presence of a large audience comprising of camp organizers, participants, students' parents and music lovers. Shri T.R. Suryanarayanan, an IIT Scientist, was the Chief Guest.

The programme started at 9 a.m. with a sterling veena concert by Shri G. R. S. Murthy accompanied by Shri Mannarkoil J. Balaji on mrudangam. This was followed by students' group rendering of the compositions they had learnt at the camp. It was amazing to witness these children presenting the songs in tune with melody and rhythm without looking at their notes despite the short period of training.

The post-lunch session began with a violin duet by Smt. Sharma's disciples Smt. Prema Sundaresan and Smt. Vanamala Dikshit. This was followed by a felicitation function where Smt. Kalyani Sharma was honoured by Sri Krishna Gana Sudha (Sri Ramamurthy's organization). The Shibhira concluded with a concert by Bangalore Vidwan Pattabhirama Pandit. He was accompanied by Shri Vittal Ramamurthy on violin and Vidwan Kanchana Eswara Bhat on mrudangam.

Everything, however good, has to come to an end. So did our musical camp. And we all returned home and to our routine lives, but memories of the outstanding musical experience continue to linger.

And we have Shri Vittal Ramamurthy to thank for this, as also for the exposure he is providing for students in remote areas and the immense service he is doing for the promotion of Carnatic music, through these camps. I hope others, particularly the music Sabhas all over India, would come forward to emulate his model. □

Book Review

EUPHONY BY L. SUBRAMANIAM

by P. P. Ramachandran

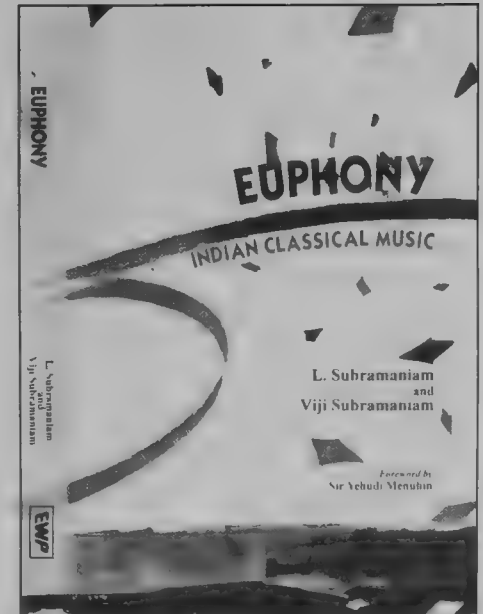
EUPHONY BY L. SUBRAMANIAM

PUBLISHED BY EAST-WEST PRESS;
PAGES 174; PRICE Rs. 295/-

Dr. L. Subramaniam, is a child prodigy, who has emerged as a master of the violin. Apart from being one of the foremost Karnatic music exponents, he has collaborated with a wide range of some of the greatest musicians from different genres of music including Hindustani, western classical, jazz and fusion. He has composed for major orchestras like the New York Philharmonic Orchestra ("Fantasy on Vedic Chants"), the Swiss Romande Orchestra ("Turbulence"), the Kirov Ballet ("Shanti Priya"), the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra ("The Concerto for Two Violins") and the Berlin Opera (Global Symphony). He has composed music for a select few films, including "Salaam Bombay" and "Mississippi Masala" and was the featured soloist for Bernardo Bertolucci's "Little Buddha" and "Cotton Mary" of Merchant-Ivory Productions. Since 1973, Subramaniam has made historic collaborations and recordings with legends like Yehudi Menuhin, Stephane Grappelli, Jean-Pierre Rampal and others.

To increase understanding of the concepts of South Indian Classical Music, he has authored, along with his late wife Vijayashree Subramaniam, the authoritative book under review "Euphony".

"Euphony" is a classic introduction to



Karnatic music. As observed by the author, "In Karnatic music, the process of creation and innovation has helped the music to grow continuously within the very strict framework of rules, making the system one of the most intellectually appealing, in addition to having strong philosophical, aesthetic and spiritual values. Spiritual quality is an intrinsic part of Karnatic music".

The book proceeds step by step to elaborate the above observation. It begins by tracing the history of Karnatic music from the Vedic times to the medieval period (5th to 15th century A.D) and the modern period

(16th century onwards). Details are provided of the oldest record of Indian music theory—the Natya Sastra of Bharata as also of the pioneering work of Matanga Muni in Sanskrit. The medieval period includes the great “Gita Govinda” of Jayadeva whose “Ashtapadis” are sung all over India even today. The next significant work is “Sangita Ratnakara” of Sarangadeva. He classified ragas according to the seasons and the times of the day. Then came, Karnataka Sangita Pitamaha Purandara Dasa who laid the foundation on which present day Karnatic music is based.

Dr Subramaniam deals at length with the creative output of Venkatamakhi who is noted for his classic formulation of the scheme of the 72 melakartas. The 18th century is the Golden Age of Karnatic Music with the advent of the Music Trinity. Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Sastri are noted for their deep knowledge, great spirituality, profound musicianship, creativity and innovations.

The author proceeds to the developments of the 19th century, especially how some instruments like the violin gained prominence and developed into solo instruments. Lucid explanations are given of the Notation System, Melodic Concept, Rhythmic Concept and Musical Forms. There is a full chapter on musical instruments used in the South Indian Karnatic system and the Hindustani system. Dr. Subramaniam provides a wealth of information on the instruments with photographs of different instruments. Hindustani music, though it had its origin

in Karnatic music, evolved its own peculiarities, largely due to outside influences and these are covered in a chapter. Dr. Subramaniam compares the two systems and notes that there has been a wider acceptance of Karnatic music in the latter half of the 20th century all over India. He wryly observes that though there are concerts of Karnatic music in parts of India other than South India, these are organized by mostly South Indian organisations. It is customary to invite Hindustani singers to perform in Karnatic Music Festivals. The reverse was rare. But this is slowly changing.

With his profound grasp and mastery of western music Dr. Subramaniam offers a stimulating comparison between Western and Indian music. The book has short biographical sketches of 26 composers from Purandara Dasa to Papanasam Sivan, with a dozen illustrations. The book is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the literature on Karnatic music and will serve as a textbook for students as also a source book for those who are new to Karnatic music. The authors have drawn on their rich experience to provide a unique perception of Indian music, especially Karnatic music.

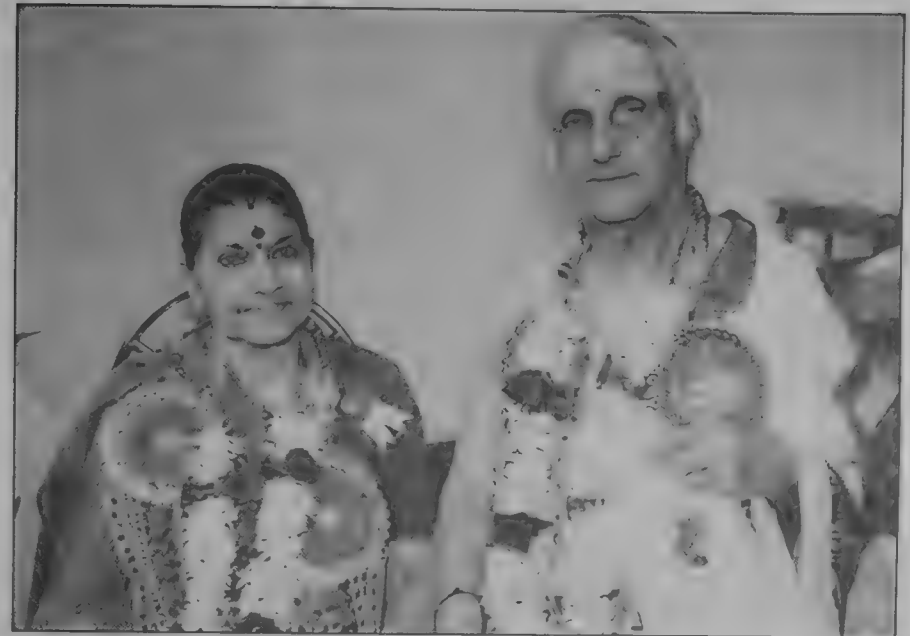
Yehudi Menuhin, arguably the greatest exponent of the violin in the West has written an affectionate Foreword. There is a crisp and valuable glossary of terms used in Karnatic music.

“Music is a vast ocean and no one can claim to know it all. The more you know, the more you realise how little you know. It is an eternal quest.” - Dr. L. Subramaniam

□

SABHA NOSTALGIA

by Nalini Dinesh



Smt. Vijayalakshmi Nathan and Shri R.S. Nathan

What would it be like to leaf through sepia-tinted memories of the sabha of our senior sabha members, right from its inception by amalgamation of three sabhas Fine Arts, South Indian Sangeetha Sabha and Shanmukhananda Sabha, through its years in the Cosmopolitan grounds in Matunga, at Podar college, its own auditorium which was burnt down completely in an accident in 1990, to its current state-of-the-art premises, complete with a digital archive of music and chamber music concert hall with sophisticated acoustics? This column sets out to do just that, and for the inaugural column we have veteran vocalist Smt.

Vijayalakshmi Nathan (popularly known as Pallavi Vijayalakshmi) and her husband Shri R.S. Nathan gamely going down memory lane, and the original half-hour that we had scheduled for our conversation, stretched into a couple of hours before this writer left their house, lovingly plied with tea and biscuits and tambdaam!

Attending concerts at Shanmukhananda was a way of life in my family, so much so that I don't remember when exactly I “started” going for concerts. I remember even in 1948 or 1949, going to Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer's concert

through the small entrance behind Poddar college, not because I had enough sangeeta gnaanam to realize the greatness of the legendary singer, but for the sake of MS Narayanaswamy mama, a Mumbai violinist and brother of MS Harihara Bhagavatar, who was standing in for the violinist from Chennai who could not make it!

I learnt so much from these concerts; in fact I treat all those artistes who I listened to at the sabha as manasika gurus. My lessons with Sri T.S. Krishnaswamy got over by the time I was fourteen, having completed the 6 year course prescribed by him. Hence, the only way I could develop my music further was by listening to concerts at Shanmukhananda and the weekly AIR programmes (whenever the broadcast was clear).

On the days when kutchery was scheduled to be broadcast on AIR, dinner at home would be over by 7.30 p.m. to enable all of us to pay full attention to the concert; if we missed the scheduled dinner time, we would have to wait till after the one-and-a-half-hour concert before we got to eat! We would listen with avid concentration since we would hear our next kutchery only the following month at the sabha! There was no Worldspace, or TV or music on Ipods, you see.

In my early years, my father used to watch me with eagle-eyes, to check that I wasn't chatting with friends and didn't miss any part of the concert. On the way back home, he used to quiz us on the ragas and kritis sung, talam of the pallavi, eduppu etc. In

my adolescent years, the foremost thought in my mind was that, I should get something from today's concert. Thanks to his guidance and this drive of mine, I was able to gain much. Some things I learnt from the concerts:

- a. Kutchery paddhati – Starting with the varnam and a kriti on Ganesha or Saraswati, and a series of kritis in rapid-fire mode in about two and half hours, the scene was set for RTP which was compulsory and took up the rest of the concert. The RTP would be followed by devotional songs like Rama Nataka kritis, Tiruppavai, Tamil kritis, Devarnamas, javalis, viruttams and the like. The kutchery format was like a sadya (feast), with a proper order of dishes to come. Or you could liken it to the arrival of a VIP, who would be preceded by a motorcade, motorcyclists at the wings, and followed by more security vehicles. The beauty of the paddhati was that it had something for each person in the audience; some would be interested in pallavi, some in kalpana swaram, some in tukkadas, yet others in tillanas or javali. It was also designed to keep the audience at boiling point; there was simply no time to get bored. I used to analyze and learn from the paddhati how to conduct my own concerts. For instance, on analyzing why they sang only the popular varnams I concluded that since a concert is a combination of three or more people, it can be a success only if all three perform as a team. Singing familiar varnams would ensure that the accompanists would not be at a loss, it

would also help them to warm up, and strike a rapport.

- b. Pallavi rendition: I've always been particularly interested in pallavis. I used to devour the pallavis of the Alathur brothers. They used to dwell in such depth, that they used to wring out the very essence of the raaga through the alapana, taanam and pallavi. I wouldn't fall asleep the night of the concert, without practising the pallavi that was sung that evening! The vocalist would sing alapana till tara shadjam, followed by the violinist's alapana, before the vocalist continued in the tara sthayi and then wrapped it up.
- c. Accompaniment for pallavi rendition - Usually, the vocalists would tell the accompanists beforehand the talam, eduppu and arudi points of the pallavi. It was then up to the accompanists to be prepared. Percussion accompaniment for kritis and pallavi does not mean just playing sarvalaghu. A good accompanist is one who has good knowledge of vocal music and all the commonly sung kritis in order to properly accompany the vocalist, with all the pauses and beats accurately. (Vijayalakshmi demonstrates by singing the Kamboji Ata Tala varnam M, G, S....) I still remember the way Palghat Mani Iyer used to accompany Pancharatna kriti renditions. This taught me the valuable lesson that teachers should insist on percussionists learning vocal music.
- d. Stage protocol - One fact which has registered in my memory was the

protocol followed by accompanists, they would always let the vocalist take the stage first, before ascending the stage themselves, irrespective of age – Palghat Mani Iyer used to let a much-younger K.V. Narayanaswami ascend the stage first. The percussion artistes would then sit on the sides such that their playing hands were visible to the audience, for instance, Palghat Mani Iyer used to sit to the right of the artist, Palani Subbudu on the left. The main artiste would be intent on ensuring that the pace of the concert did not slacken, there would be no looking around here and there at the audience, frequent drinking of water etc.

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar was a fine example for the kutchery paddhati and stage protocol. He ensured the success of every concert of his, even when accompanists were not up to the mark.

Apart from the monthly concerts, the annual music festival at the sabha was much looked forward to. All the top artistes of the day would be featured for a very nominal 2nd class ticket price of Rs. 10 for 12 programmes. Each concert was not less than 4 hours duration.

The audience used to listen in rapt attention, with no coffee/tiffin breaks, in fact, we don't even remember if there was a canteen in those times. Most people sat on the ground, whether first or second class, there were very few chairs. There were separate sections for ladies and gents.

There were 6000 members in those days, half the audience used to listen to the

scheduled artistes on one day, and the other half listened to the same artistes on the next day. So there was much excitement and buzz in the conversation among the members in the first half and those in the next half, as to what ragas, what kritis and what pallavi was sung in their respective sessions, since the artistes did not repeat the fare between the two days.

Those were leisurely times when office-goers could actually leave office by 5:30 pm and make it in time for the concerts! Members would come from as far as Vile Parle and Andheri by train and go back late at night without fear of being mugged, robbed or kidnapped! The sabha on its part would also arrange buses to common points of access, to facilitate easy commute for the members.

Stars like Ariyakudi, Semmangudi, GNB, Alathur brothers, Madurai Mani Iyer, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, MLV, DKP, MS, dancers like Balasaraswati, Kamala Lakshman, Vyajayantimala and instrumentalists like Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai, Chowdiah, Vilvadrinathan (ghatam), flute Mali accompanied very well by T. Rukmini, come to mind when talking about these festivals. Apart from the stars there were also other great artistes like K.B. Sundarambal, Manakkal Rangarajan and Madurai Somu who performed at the sabha. Spectacular dramas also used to be staged.

D.K. Pattammal used to sing more Dikshitar



kritis. I remember Sri Matrubhootam of Madurai Mani Iyer, and occasionally Navagraha kritis by other artistes. Apart from these not much of Dikshitar kritis were heard except by DKP.

Some of the renditions that are etched in memory are: Chembai's Raghuvara in Pantuvaraali, KVN's Pakkala nilabadi - Sukkala... is in such a high pitch, it usually sounds good only when sung by ladies, but it sounded so good when rendered by KVN, Madurai Mani Iyer's Tiruvadi Charanam - Edutha jananam used to pierce the heart, especially with the knowledge of Madurai Mani Iyer's travails in life - and Parimala Rangapate, GNB's Kalyani, Alathur Brothers' Entara with neraval at Seshudu and Evarani.

I remember the time when Chembai actually overheard someone in the audience murmuring about the same song being sung in Pantuvaraali by him every time, and responded loudly "Don't think that I know only this song in Pantuvaraali, the audience is happy only if I sing this song, so I please them!"

There was one occasion when Madurai Mani Iyer's kutchery was scheduled, and even till 3:30 p.m. that afternoon not even a sound would come from his badly infected throat. Finally Lalgudi the scheduled accompanist played solo, and the money was refunded for those in the audience who demanded it!

□

READERSPEAK...

I read with much interest the write up on Kodumudi Kokilam Smt. K. B. Sundarambal published in your April - June 2009 issue.

May I be permitted to give details gathered by me on the first meeting of KBS with Sri S.G. Kittappa who later became her life partner. When KBS's drama troupe was in Ceylon to stage special dramas, notices were pasted on the walls very near to the venue of the play challenging anyone to compete with KBS in music! Those days talent in music was the prime qualification to be an actor / actress rather than their efficiency in acting according to the dialogue and scenes.

Sri Kittappa's drama troupe visited Ceylon next day. His music was based on "kelvi-gnanam" and sales of gramophone records carrying his rendition of the songs *Evarani*, *Aandavan Darisaname*, *Geetaarthamu*, and *Kandeepan Maithuna* exceeded the targets set by the company.

On seeing the wall notices, Kittappa desired to meet KBS to challenge her on music and visited the house where she stayed and straight away proceeded to the bedroom where she was relaxing. Wondering at the boldness of the hero, KBS just bowed her head down with bashfulness and smiled. After mutual exchange of words, Kittappa requested her to sing a song. But KBS insisted that Kittappa should sing first. Immediately, Kittappa sang his own composition in the raga Shuddha Saaveri, *Elloraiyum Polave*. The melodious voice and sahitya bhava with which the song was rendered by him captivated the heart of KBS and the bee fell into the honey!

Thus the first meeting itself ended in their marriage!

While on the subject, it will be very interesting to note that KBS was the first actress who was paid

Rs. 1 lakh as the remuneration for her role of Nandanar in the film "Bhakta Nandanar" produced by Assandas released in 1935.

N. Srinivasan Secretary, Indian Fine Arts Society, Chennai.

★

Tyagaraja's Sanskrit Compositions

Dr. Bhuvaneshwari has written a very insightful article on "Sanskrit Compositions of Tyagaraja" (Shanmukha, April-June 2009).

It will not be out of context to advert to the tremendous efforts of Dr. V.Raghavan and Prof.C.Ramanujachariar, who on the occasion of the death centenary—in 1946—of Tyagaraja compiled a book of all the songs of Tyagaraja. According to Dr.Raghavan, Tyagaraja was both a devotee and an artist. The combination of Vedanta, devotion, and literary treatment in his songs reminded one of the Bhagavata Purana. Raghavan decided that the text of the songs should be published in devanagari script. Apart from the compositions in Sanskrit there are numerous songs in which the Telugu diction is dominated by Sanskrit and even in the other remaining pieces, there is a considerable amount of Sanskritised expression.

Tradition believes that, on the whole, Tyagaraja composed 24,000 songs on the glory of Rama, to be on par with the 24,000 shlokas of Valmiki's Ramayana. Alas! The songs available to us are only 800 or so.

Dr. Bhuvaneshwari deserves to be complimented on her pioneering essay on the compositions of Tyagaraja, along with their raga, tala and type. She has highlighted the mastery of the saint over Sanskrit—rightly called Deva Bhasha, as also his command over our epics, Puranas and Upanishads. Tyagaraja was a great polymath.

P. P. Ramachandran, Mumbai

SABHA ROUNDUP

Jyeshtha Dampati Celebration 9th Aug 2009

by Nalini Dinesh



Sri Rudrabhishekam being performed

A unique, grand and yet utterly charming event took place at the sabha premises in August this year – a felicitation of our eldest members, those who have seen a thousand moons or Sahasra Chandra Darshees in general, and in specific, the Poornabhishekam or centenary celebrations of Shri M.R. Doraiswamy and Smt. Ponnu Doraiswamy. While one has heard about mass weddings and mass upanayanams, mass sathabhishekam has got to be a rare event, if not the first of its kind. Rarer still it would be, to find an institution that has taken it upon itself to conduct this noble event.

It all started with a routine membership drive, during which Shri Lakshman, a sabha worker happened to visit the house of Shri M.R. Doraiswamy and discovered that he is completing a hundred years on 9th Aug 2009. On casually mentioning this to the President Shri V. Shankar, the idea took root in his mind as to why not celebrate this rare

occasion at the sabha. On further discussions it was also decided to felicitate members who had completed eighty years of age. After much discussion and planning, a list of members to be felicitated was drawn up, information and instruction sheets for every member/couple drawn up, gifts for the members finalized after much thought, centenary couple invited in person by Shri V. Shankar and Shri Venkiteswaran with their spouses and Sahasra Chandra Darshee couples invited in person by other committee members, right down to the minute details of designating rest areas for the aged members and allotting badges for family members designated to assist the members during the function.

On D-day, beautiful long gajras and the traditional sindoor, sandalwood and sugar candy trays actually manned (surprise!) by members of the Women's wing, welcomed one at the entrance – in most weddings nowadays these trays lie forlornly on a deserted table at the entrance, while family members are elsewhere, secure in having "contracted" out the wedding nitty-gritties! The festivities had already begun at 6:00 a.m. with sankalpam being done by Shri Amarnath Sury and wife with names and nakshatras of all the couples and single members to be felicitated. It was divine to see the large number of vedic priests conducting the homams and vedic chanting with aplomb led by the redoubtable Ganesha Shastrigal. Young students from the SIES veda pathashala at Nerul also participated in the vedic chanting. Sri Ganapathy homam, Sri Vishnu Gayatri homam, Sri Purusha Sookta

Homam, Navagaraha Japam, Dasha Daanam, Ayushya Homam, Sri Rudrabhishekam, Chaturveda Parayanam and Durga Shanti Pat were the various religious programmes conducted on that day, apart from the Swarna Kanakabhishekam. The elderly couples entering the venue with proud and happy smiles, the abhishekam of the Shivalingam with curds and sandalwood and water, and subsequently decorated beautifully with vastram and flowers, the kanakabhishekam of the centenary couple and their crowning, the smiling family members in the group photo and the toothless smile of the grand old man at a great grandson, are all memorable vignettes of the function



Swarna Kanakabhishekam for the centenary couple

There was a formal presentation function after the religious ceremonies, which began with a very apt invocation to Tirukkadaiyur Abhirami (in Tamil Nadu, 60-year and 80-year birthdays are commonly celebrated at Tirukkadaiyur) sung by Vimarshini Jairam and Vidyanandi and Shri V. Shankar's address with some very relevant points about the purpose of this celebration. In the Taittiriyanopanishad, the Lord lists five categories of people that he respects, the Nityaannadaata (one who always donates

to charity), the Tarunaagnihotri (young men who perform all the daily Vedic rituals invoking Agni), the Maasopavaasi (one who fasts every month), the Pativrata (the lady devoted to her husband) and the Sahasrachandradarshee – one who has seen over a thousand moons in his lifetime, the Lord calls him even Jyeshtha to himself. Shri Shankar also pointed out yet another unique feature of the day's celebrations; this was the first time the sabha has had the opportunity to celebrate a centenary in the live presence of the centenarian himself!

Prasadam from Tirukkadaiyur, Tirupati, Sringeri, Kancheepuram, Ahobila Mutt, Dombivili Balaji, Chembur Subramanyar, Mahalaxmi, Siddhivinayak, Shankar Mutt and Bhajana Samaj, specially arranged for the occasion by Shri Shankar were offered to the couples. This was followed by the presentation of gifts. The gift hamper included silk saree and dhoti, a gold coin, white woolen shawl, decorative sandalwood mala, rudraksha mala, tamboolam bag, sweet box and geriatry kit comprising a trolley bag, 7 day medicine box, alarm stop watch, magnifying glass, woolen blanket, jute mat, air pillow, torch, pen set, thermos flask and a Shanmukhananda umbrella.

A short hilarious play, relevant to the occasion, written by Santosh Rajan, was staged to round off the function.

The couples were overwhelmed at the affection and attention showered on them and their happiness sealed the success of this initiative.

Members' Day 30th Aug 2009

by Jyothi Mohan

On the morning of 30th August 2009, the Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Auditorium resembled a marriage hall- rustling kanjeevarams, the air heady with the fragrance of jasmine and excited banter. Yes, the occasion was the Members' Day programme, which is greatly looked forward to, by the members. It is the day of the members for the members! This programme showcases the talent of the members of the sabha, giving them an opportunity to perform on that hallowed stage before the huge, discerning audience. Members turned up in large numbers to encourage the talented fellow members who had cleared the auditions held earlier.



Seshadri mama's bust being garlanded

The programme began with a melodious salutation to Lord Vinayaka by Sidhi Krishnamurthy. Shri Amarnath Sury then requested the family of the late Sri S. Sheshadri to garland Sri Sheshadri's bust. Shri V. Shankar spoke about the great and selfless contribution of Sheshadri mama (as he was affectionately known), to the growth of the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha. It was indeed appropriate, that the unveiling of the bust

happened on Members' Day, as every member looked up to Sheshadri mama with great respect-he was indeed synonymous with the Sabha.

Little Adarsh Sriram was the youngest member to perform and was honoured at the end of the programme for being so. He played the lilting *Hum Honge Kamyab* on the keyboard. This was followed by the Veena Trio of Vinaya Rao, Praveena Gouthaman and Jyothi Ramamurthy who regaled the audience with the ever-popular, *Raghuvamsha Sudha* and the catchy song- *Sare Jahan Se Accha*. Rohit Prasad sang the glorious Revati composition dedicated to Lord Shiva - *Bho Shambho* accompanying himself very ably on the mridangam. The Marathi abhang by L. Subramanian was followed by a tabla solo recital by Sri Rajan Singh Thakur. Next on stage were the made-for-each other-couple -Shri Rajan & Smt. Santosh Rajan. Mami's expressive face offered abhinaya to Mama's baritone rendering of *Thaye Yashoda*-their enthusiasm was indeed very heartening! Veteran member Shri R. S. Nathan took the audience back to the 1940s with his Hindi film song parody. He was the oldest member to perform and was felicitated for it at the end of the show.

The drama segment is always looked forward to with great anticipation and the children's play-'Julius Ceasar Who Never Was', lived up to its promise. The children played their roles with great conviction and had the audience in splits throughout the twenty minutes that the play lasted. Little Pavitra as Muthamma stole the hearts of the audience and was given a special prize for her great performance. The play was

written and directed by Smt. Santosh Rajan.



Kum. Pavitra and Master Ramnath in children's play - 'Julius Ceasar Who Never Was'

After the drama, it was time for the dancers to take over. Netra Narayan and Surabhi Suresh presented a Shabdham which took us through the story of Lord Kartikeya's birth, his valorous deeds and culminated in Valli Kalyanam. Nupur Pai presented a shloka and the song *Tandaveswara*, eulogising Lord Shiva. Her picture-perfect poses reminiscent of his Ananda Tandava drew spontaneous applause from the appreciative audience. Nithya Subramaniam and Divya Shah presented the contrasting tandava and lasya in an item aptly named *Tandava lasya*. The dance segment concluded with the children's group dance put together by Smt. Santosh Rajan. It was a blend of different folk styles, representing different regions of our country, ending with a song proclaiming national integration.

The light music section saw a lot of talent come to the fore. Aditya Rajagopal brought the roof down with his superb rendering of *Roja janeman*, which received thunderous applause. Kaveri Anantharaman and Pushpa Anantharaman sang Hindi film songs. The Tamil film duet by Vignesh & Purnima as well as some of the film songs

were accompanied on the keyboard by Pranav Ganapathy, who also played a solo film song (*Mukkala muqabla*). The talented Christina with sister Mareena Marydas accompanying beautifully on the keyboard, sang *Ajeeb dastan hain yeh*. R. Gopalakrishnan's *Pukarta chala hun* main had the audience tapping their feet to his melodious rendering. The Tamil film song duet (*Mullai malar mele*) by Shri Amarnath Sury and Praveena Gauthaman with Vignesh Gauthaman on the key board was received with great enthusiasm by members, who were not aware that Shri Sury was a good singer as well! The group song (*Aasma ke par*) by Kaveri, Pushpa, Aditya and Vignesh was also liked by the members.

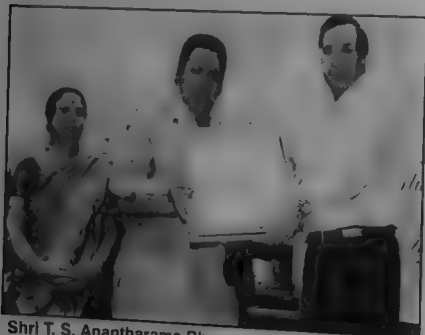
A brief prize distribution function was held. Members' children and grandchildren were presented with a gift and an autographed copy of former President, APJ Abdul Kalam's 'Ignited Minds Unleashing the Power Within India', for their outstanding performance in SSC, HSC and Graduate Degree Course. Prizes were distributed by President Shri V. Shankar and Shri Venkiteswaran, Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustees. Prizes were also awarded to the winners of the essay competition conducted by the Women's Wing. The judges of the competition were felicitated. This was followed by a brief vote of thanks by Shri Amarnath Sury, Hon. Secretary.

Young Ganesh paid his tribute to the American superstar, Michael Jackson, complete with coat, hat and the white glove. The old Hindi film songs medley by Jayaram Atreya and party was followed by a group rendering of *Shanti Nilava Vendum*

led by Bhavani Srinivasan. This tribute to the late Smt.D.K.Pattamal brought to an end, the nearly 4-hour long talent-filled, variety entertainment programme by members. The crisp compering of the programme was by Sidhi Krishnamoorthy. Smt.Santosh Rajan compered the drama segment while Jyothi Mohan did the compering for the dance segment. The lunch that followed, saw members catch up with their friends and compliment the participants on their performance. Indeed, it was a day well-spent and members wait for the next Members' Day with great eagerness.

Best Teacher Award 16th Sept 2009 by Nalini Dinesh

The M.S. Subbulakshmi Shanmukhananda Best Teacher Award for 2009 was awarded to Shri T.S. Anantharama Bhagavatar.



Shri T. S. Anantharama Bhagavathar being honoured

Dr. Rangarajan welcomed the gathering. President Shri V. Shankar in his address mentioned the uniqueness of this award, it being the only one ever to be named after M.S. Subbulakshmi with her permission and blessings. This journey began six years ago and the first two awardees were fortunate to have the blessings of the great

lady herself. The award honours the gurus in Mumbai who are instrumental in producing good artistes by sacrificing the stage themselves.

Born in 1942 in the great musical family of Palakkad Anantharama Bhagavatar (grandfather of Sri Anantharama Bhagavatar), Sri Anantharaman had the good fortune of having musical stalwarts like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Palakkad Subbayyar feeding him on the day of his annapraasanam! In fact Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar had asked his father to send him to Chennai so that he could thrive in music, destiny instead sent him to Mumbai and a successful teaching career, which is about to complete its golden jubilee in a year's time. Sri Anantharaman had his initial musical training under his aunt Smt Mangalam, herself a disciple of Palakkad Anantharama Bhagavatar, and continued his tutelage under Shri Appukkuttan Marar, a disciple of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar. He had advanced training under Shri Tiruchi Swaminatha Iyer. He is also adept at the harmonium (he accompanied N.S. Vishwanathan in his bhajan programmes and many doyens like Haridas Giri Swami, Krupananda Variyar and Erode Vishwanatha Iyer) and has learnt the mridangam from the late Palakkad Shri Raghu.

It was touching to listen to the guru's candid confession that in innumerable concerts that he'd attended in Shanmukhananda, he had wished that it was he who was seated up there on that hallowed dais and singing, and at long last that wish was to be fulfilled that evening.

Shri V.Krishnamurthy, Vidyalaya sub-

committee member, Shri R. Shridhar (student of Sri Anantharama Bhagavatar) and Shri T.N. Ashok also spoke on the occasion.

Prasadam from various temples in Mumbai were presented to Shri Anantharama Bhagavatar and his wife while the actual award included a cheque for Rs. 25,000, icon of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeeta Sabha, citation, silver lamp and beautiful garlands.

Other sabhas in Mumbai then felicitated Sri Anantharama Bhagavatar and wife.

The function concluded with a neat concert by Shri Anantharama Bhagavatar accompanied by his disciples, son Shivakumar and Vignesh Ishwar, dedicated to Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi. The one-and-a-half-hour concert had in its list of items, *Tatvamariya Tarama* (Reetigowla, with kalpana swaras), *Kanchadalaayataakshi* (Kamala Manohari), *Rama Nannu Brovaraa* (Hari Kamboji), *Enna Gaanu Rama Bhajana* (Pantuvaraali, with neraval and swaras), a racy *Vara Narada, Brochevaarevaruraa* (Kamaas), *Neevaada Ne Gaana* (Saarangaa), *Akshayalinga Vibho* (Shankarabharanam, with neraval and swaras at Badari vana), *Maaye* (Tarangini) and *Maitreem Bhajata*. Able accompaniment was provided by Shri K. Shivakumar on the violin, Shri S. Shankaranarayanan on the mridangam and Rohit Prasad on the morsing.

Music Competition Prize Distribution 12th Sept 2009 - by Nalini Dinesh

Prizes for the annual music competition conducted by the sabha in Feb 2009, were distributed by vocalist Smt. S. Sowmya. Sowmya made an important point in her speech about the lack of entries for music competitions in general. Smt. Sowmya

spoke about the importance of encouraging children to participate in competitions, since they offer an opportunity for students to correct or improve their renditions from experts without having to seek an appointment with them for interaction, besides providing the impetus to widen the students' repertoire. She stated that the lack of entries is even plaguing the Madras Music academy competitions, to the extent that in recent years the organisers have been forced to mention "Atleast 2 krithis of a particular composer" as against the earlier requirement of minimum 10 krithis of a composer in composer-based competitions.



Kum. Vidyandandi N. Iyer receiving competition prize from Ms. S. Sowmya

The prize distribution function was followed by a concert by Sowmya. The highlights of the concert were her Sahaana alapana for *Ee Vasudha* and kalpana swaram at 3/4th eduppu, a Ramalinga Adigalar Tiruvartuppa sung brilliantly as a viruttam in Todi, Jyotiswaroopini taken up as the main raaga with an alapana which brought forth a lovely raaga swaroopa without harping too much on the vivaaditvam and a beautiful pallavi in Kharaharapriya, *Harapriye Lalite Paahi Tarunendu Shekhara* with ragamaliika swaras in Ranjani, Mohanam, Behaag and Surutti. □

HAPPENINGS AT THE VIDYALAYA

by Nalini Dinesh

VAGGEYAKARA DAY CELEBRATIONS :
Papanasam Sivan, Oothukaadu
Venkatasubbaiyer & Gopalakrishna
Bharati Day - 18 July 2009.



Priya Chittoor with Varun Sundar on Violin &
 K. Raghavan on Mrudangam

Young Priya Chittur presented a lively vocal recital of the prolific composers being celebrated. Beginning with Sivan's *Sri Vatapi Ganapatiye* in Sahana, and Gopalakrishna Bharati's *Innamum Sandehappadalaamo* in Keeravani preceded by a viruttam, she went onto an Ananda Bhairavi composition of Venkata Kavi, *Gambheera Nadaiyodu* which had vivid imagery of Lord Krishna's wedding and which Priya seemed to revel in presenting including the Oothukaadu-trademark catchy points of the song like Raja Gambheera and Oyyaara Gambheera. After a neat *Shree Jagadaambikaaye* in Lataangi, she presented a shloka from *Mukundaashtakam Karaara Vindena* in Chenchurutti followed by *Muthukrishna*, which was a little disappointing. Priya's rendition of sangatis was crystal-clear

(except for one or two places as in the Lataangi kriti), her Tamil diction is excellent despite her US upbringing, she has a powerful voice with perfect shruti alignment and her endings were spot on. Priya learns from Smt. Susheela Mani on telephone.

The second recital of the day was a duet by Sandhya and Shobana Bala-subramaniam, who commenced with Sivan's Reetigowla kriti *Tatvam Ariya Tarama. Sabhapatikku* in Aabhogi followed. The nishadam was heard a number of times in this nishada-varjya raaga. The following Mukhari kriti (Sivan's *Sivakama Sundari*) rendition had DNS and RGM usage whereas Mukhari's aarohanam is SRMPDS which forbids both. *Srinivasa* in Hamsanandi, *Kalyana Raama* in Hamsanaadam and *Eppo Varuvaaro* in Jonpuri rounded off the recital. Their voices are their asset and coordination was a huge plus. If the sisters would work on shruti alignment, modulation and strong stanza endings (applying swara gnaanam) it would lift their performance several notches.

Shri Varun Sundar and Shri K. Raghavan supported the vocalists on the violin and mridangam and Govind anchored the programme.

MUTHU THANDAVAR, ARUNACHALA
KAVIRAYAR & OTHER TAMIL
COMPOSERS DAY-22nd August 2009

Smt. Rohini Venkatachalam gave a mature vocal recital of contemporary Tamil

composers, lending lustre to each composition. Shuddhā Saaveri set the auspicious tone (Periyasami Tooran's *Taaye Tripurasundari*), followed by a vivaadi variation with Vaagadheeshwari (Koteeshwara Iyer's *Naadanu Santaaname*). Rohini gave a brief introduction to the raagam demonstrating the aarohanam and avarohanam and also sang a sketch of the raaga, stressing on the shatshruti rishabham and antara gandharam combination with care. Muthu Tandavar's *Unpaadame Tunai* in Shubha Pantuvaraali was followed by the catchy Misra Chaapu-Begada kriti *Kadaikkan Vaitthennai* of Ramaswamy Sivan. While both had madhyama kaala passages after anupallavi and charanam, the Begada kriti's madhyama kaala sahitya was ornate with the syllable "dari" used repeatedly in various words (vandari, un darisanam, tripura sundari etc). Another vivaadi raagam followed, this one with a prati madhyamam, Paavani; *Anjaade Nenjame* of Koteeshwara Iyer. *Nityaanandatthai Naadu* - Vedanayakam Pillai's kriti in Kaapi, ended the recital. While Rohini's clear vocalisation of sangatis and lyrics was appreciable, there was a little too much stress on the same sometimes, which resulted in a staccato effect. This was more evident in her rendition of the vivaadi raaga kritis, where she laid undue stress on the vivaadi swaras like shatshruti rishabham.

Smt. Subha Kailas gave the second recital of the day. Invoking Lord Ganapati with *Kaitthala Niraikkani* with correct and clear enunciation and splitting of words, she next sang Arunaachala Kaviraayar's *Ramanataka kriti* set to Hindolam

Ramanukku Mannanmudi preceded by a short alapana of Hindolam which was wanting in terms of gamakkas. Muthu Taandavar's Andolika kriti *Sevikka Vendumayya*, Ambujam Krishna's *Om Namo Narayana* in Karnaranjani and Arunaachala Kaviraayar's *Sharanam* (in which the Samudra raja seeks refuge in Rama's mercy, requesting him not to shoot any more fire arrows) followed. A confident alapana of Kaanada preceded Ambujam Krishna's melting kriti *Enna Solli*. Another lilting Tiruppugazh *Paadi Mathi Nathi* was rendered in conclusion, the impact of which was only marred by the singer's reference to a paper. Subha has a nice base. With better development and application of swara gnaanam, small glitches here and there can be corrected.

Shri Vishwanath Ramaswamy and Shri Srirama Subramanian provided violin and mridangam support. The programme was compered by Smt. Balathirupurasundari.

Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkande Day 19th Sept 2009

Smt. Shiital Vinit Khandkar presented a vocal recital with the main raaga being Yaman, with a vilambit and drut bandish of Shree Ananta Manohar Joshi; *Jiya manat nahi* in taal Tilawada and *Nanadike bachanawa sahe na jaay* in Teen taal and a tarana *Derna deran deran* composed by her guru Dr. Shreeram Deshpande. She concluded her recital with a paramparik bandish in raag Bageshri, *Gunde Lao Ri Malaniya* in Teen tal. Shiital was accompanied on the tabla by Shri Prasad Padhye and harmonium by Shri Pravin

Deshpande. Shiital is an upcoming artiste with a lot of promise.



Shri Ulhas Bapat's Santoor recital with Prasad Padhye on the Tabla

Pandit Ulhas Bapat presented a santoor recital which stood out for his unique ideas, improvisation and imagination. The opening raaga Maaru Bihag with alap, jod and zala was brilliant in presentation and development and had excellent layakaari. The second item was a dhun in Desh in Deepchandi taal, this had a sheen of its own with a lot of variety. The closing item was raag Bhairavi which created a lovely atmosphere. Shri Prasad Padhye accompanied the santoor artiste on the tabla.

Talent Exposure Concert-28 Aug 2009



Smt. Anjana Ray's Sitar recital accompanied by Siddhesh Shirke on the Tabla

It was a moment of pride for the Vidyalaya to host its first ever Hindustani talent exposure concert – the sitar recital of Anjana Ray (4th year), accompanied by Siddhesh Shirke (7th year student of the Vidyalaya) on the tabla. While Anjana took some time to warm up, through a rather elementary Bhoopali alaap followed by madhya laya and drut laya gat in teen tal, she got into her stride by the time she started Hindol (which sounded like the Carnatic raaga Sunaada Vinodini). The alaap was followed by a drut gat from Ritu Samhara in teen taal. One could see the amount of hard work put in by the shishya and her guru Sri Parchure. Siddhesh, disciple of Vidyalaya faculty member Shri Milind Joshi, acquitted himself very well in the tabla solo which followed.

Kum. Vidyanandi's Carnatic veena recital was the second programme of the evening. It was a thoroughly professional one, and a shining example for the other Vidyalaya students to emulate. She commenced with a Pantuvaraali varnam composed by Pallavur Mani Iyer, followed by a small but beautiful sketch of Ataana for the Thyagaraja kriti *Naarada Gaana Lola*. She then played an elaborate Madhyamavati, with neraval and kalpana swaras embellishing *Paalintsu Kaamakshi*. A bhava-laden rendering of *Kurai Ondrum Illai* rounded off the concert. Vidyanandi was accompanied on the mridangam by Sangeet Venkateshwaran who has honed his skills to a much higher level now, played a short tani for *Paalintsu Kaamakshi*. There was not a single apaswaram even at the high speed employed by Vidyanandi, and she played in her guru Smt. Mangalam

Muthuswamy's style of singing alongside. Vidyanandi is currently a diploma student of the Vidyalaya in the vocal discipline.

Saraswati Pooja and Vidyarambham

Saraswati pooja was celebrated at the Vidyalaya with a pooja on 8th Oct. 2009, followed by a recital of Navavarana kritis of Oothukadu Venkatasubbier and other Devi kritis by Bhavani Srinivasan, Sugandha Athreya, Savitri Shastri, Bharathi Nagraj and Mahathi Nagraj, all disciples of Smt. Kalyani Sharma. Smt. Prema Sundaresan accompanied the group on the violin and Sudarshan Swaminathan provided mridangam accompaniment. The group began with the invocation to Ganesha in Shanmukhapriya raagam *Shree Ganeshwara* and the dhyaana kriti in Kalyani *Vaanchasi Yadi Kushalam*, followed by the first four aavarana kritis; *Santatam Aham Seve* in Bilahari, originally in Deshakshi (Trailokya Mohana chakram), *Bhajasva Shree Tripurasundari* in Naadanaamakriyaa (Sarvaashaa paripooraka chakram), *Sarvajeeva*

Dayakari in Shuddha Saaveri (Sarvasamkshobhana chakram) and *Yoga Yogeshwari* in Ananda Bhairavi (Sarva Sowbhaagyaadaayaka chakram).

The kritis from the Kaamaakshi Navavarana suite of Venkata kavi were a treat to the ears. The lyrics flowed easily, as beautiful as the goddess they were describing, or maybe it is the goddess who lent them luster! Just as one was looking forward to the next aavarana kriti, the group switched to Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Kamalaambaa Navaavarana kriti of the day in Aahiri followed by Swati Tirunal's Navaraatri kriti of the day *Paahi Parvata Nandini* in Aarabhi and concluded with the phala stuti kriti of the Kaamaakshi Navaavaranam suite in Manirangu, *Haladaraanujam*.

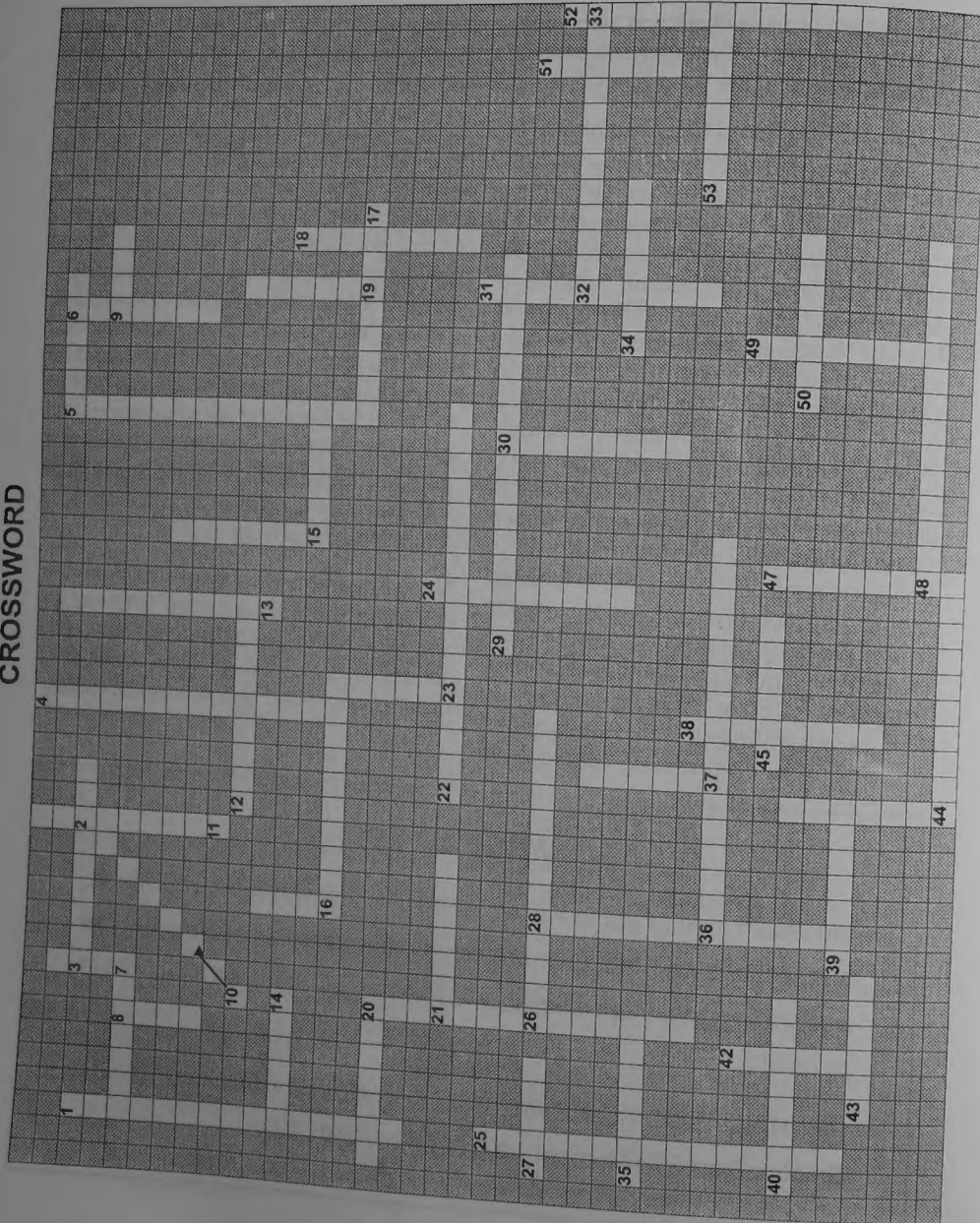
Vijayadashami was celebrated on the following day with a pooja, followed by rendition of the basic Carnatic lessons by all students and faculty. New admissions were commenced on this auspicious day. □

WRITE TO US!

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CROSSWORD



Across:

2. This is a single lettered Ragam in any Indian Language (3)
3. The first two letters are that of a summer season fruit, next four letters - son of Rama & joins with answer of (2) 2+4+3- (9)
5. Kaikeyi demanded from Dasaratha (6)
9. Famous, flavour rich, tasty drink of Tanjore / Tamil Nadu. (4)
12. Favourite Ragam of Thyagaraja's Nayaka is suggested by the name (9)
15. The ragam literally means ; 'The first note of the Arohanam itself is its second note' (6)
16. Action by the 'Devas' (9)
21. Attractive, joyful, beautiful, Jana Ranjaka ragam (7)
22. Name denotes that there are Six types of 'Margams' (16)
26. 'Sun' and 'Moon' together (13)
27. The rising of answer of (26) 5+--+13 (18)
29. Same Melakartha (16)
32. 'Nenarunchinanu' (6)
34. _____ Sahasranamam (7)
35. Instrument Narada has in his hand (7)
36. The full 'form' of light. Last 7 letters of a Tamil actress (16)
39. A form of music sung and danced in fast tempo with jati patterns (7)
40. Ragam of first geetham (8)
43. A 'That' in Hindustani music (6)
44. Goddess of all Arts (10)
45. A musician / gem in the court of Akbar (6)
50. Tune and pluck this - enjoy the bliss (7)
53. Conclusion piece of the concert (8).

Across Reverse :

7. Ear of the eldest son of Shiva and Parvathi in Sanskrit (7)
14. Royal court (6)
17. Goddess of Arts selling green leaves in Tamil (9)
20. Name of a Goddess - A popular Prathimadhyama Ragam, 'Stone and Nail' what a combination! (7)
33. The famous swarajathi of Shyama Sastri shares the last two letters with (32) (A little jumbled) 6+2=8
46. Holy Ragam in Sanskrit (6)
48. Light items are usually sung in this 'rakthi' ragam. First 6 letters of a river + a famous 8 lettered Bhashanga Ragam; shares the name with a famous Tamil Movie (14)

Up:

7. Ragam that gives Shantha rasam (4)
10. Unexpected wealth in shortcut + answer of (2) Across 5+3=8
11. Victory + answer of (2) across 6+3=9
13. Melam number 31 (10)
15. Deer - Vaishnava God's first name (7)
16. Nation (4)
19. Sounds like a variety of Banana fruit full of 'Rasa' (6)
23. Spencer Sri Venugopal has composed a song 'Sari Samanamevaru' in this Ragam (6)
37. Veda Mata & also mother of music (6)
44. A tele serial by a famous director of Tamil movie (7)

Down :

1. Shower of Nectar (15)
4. Name denotes the Ragam that Lord Muruga likes (14)
5. Gives way to those who worship (14)

6. St. Thyagaraja exclaims about the good fortune of 'Shabari' in this ragam. (7)
8. 'Aarumo Aaval' Aarumuganai Neril Kaanaamal - starts with letter 'M' (4).
18. First lesson after learning the Alankarams in music (7)
20. Name denotes the Ragam Shiva likes, starting with a bad throat (14)
24. Sounds like a bell (9)
25. One who attracts the mind of 'Maa' / Lakshmi's husband / Dhavaa (15).
28. Moonlight (13)
30. A morning Raga (8)
31. Garland of (Tamil) 'Pans' (10)
38. Name connected with spring season (8)
41. A muslim name shows a few shades of the answer of (33) across (6)
42. 'Bell' Tower (6)
47. Starts with wealth in Hindi. Do you see? (8)
49. Goddess worshipped by Shyama Sastri
51. Flute - B.M.K's pen name (6)
52. Ragam in which we sing mangalam for Kosalendra (13)

குறுக்கேழுத்து 1 விடைகள்

1	அ			3	மா	ள	வ	2	மு			4			யா			5	வ	ர	6	மு					
	ம்	ர	ம	8	சா		னா	ய				ண்			ரி			ந்		9	கா	பி					
	ரு		ண்		10	த		ஜ				மு		ப்	கா			த		ரி							
	த		டு					11	லி			க		க	ங்			ன									
	வ									12	ரா	ம	ப்	ரி	13	யா		ர		தா		ளி					
	ர்	பா	ர்	14	த		ஷ்						ரி				15	ஸா	வே	ரி		ஸா					
	லி							16	தே	வ	க்	ரி	யா		பி				ணி	வா	18	ர	17	கீ			
	ணி	யா	ல்	19	க										ட									த			
				20	ர	ஞ்	ஜ	னி					21	ஷ்	ட்	22	வி	23	த	மா	ர்	கி	ணி		ம்		
	24	மா																									
26	உ	த	ய	-	25	ர	வி	27	ச	ந்	த்	ரி	28	கா		29	ச	ங்	க	30	ரா	ப	ர	ண	ம்		
	வ						ப்				ந்			மா				கி		க			31	மு			
	32	ம	ல	ஹ	ரி			த்			தி		சுதி					ணி		33	மா	ள	(வி)	ர	34	பை	
	சேனா				யா			ர			ரு									35	ல	லி	தா		ளி		
36	ம	ஹ	தி										37	ஜோ	தி	38	ஸ	39	வ	ரூ	பி	ணி			50	ம	
	ரி				னா	ஸா	ல்	40	தி							ஸ											
41	ஹு				ஹா															42	த	ம்	43	பூ	ரா	ங்	ய
	சே				44	ஸ	ர	ஸ்	வ	தி			45	தா	ன்	சே	ன்		பா				க		மா		
	னி	வ	46	பா															யா			ள		ள		வ	
					டா	ண்	47	க		வி	ர	பை	து	ந்	48	ஸி						ம்		ம்		தி	



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